

LETTERS,
WRITTEN FOR THE POST,
AND
NOT FOR THE PRESS.

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'FROM THE EDITOR.

WHEN it appeared likely that this little work might reach beyond the circle for which 'it was first printed,' I searched every where to find a suitable Preface, but a friend, who called upon me just at the moment, cut the matter short by asking, *When I had ever heard of a Preface written for the Post?*



LETTER I.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

57

Harley Street, May.

I HAVE often heard it said, my dear Jane, that one of the delights of intending to travel was the triumph it gave you over those who remained behind; but I have been born half a century too late to enjoy this; and last night, waiting for the carriage at the Opera, Ladies Emily and Sarah swept by, with "Oh! you go to Scotland, Lady Lucy, & hear; we shall pass this summer and autumn in Italy." So my poor pretensions to be a tourist were nipt in the bud; and I am obliged to fall back to the second-rate travellers, who, like myself, are content to wander over the British islands. I

took my station to-day at Le B.'s lecture, beside Mrs. U. and her daughter, who were in Scotland last summer, and made much the same tour we intend. Although Mamma will be guided by advice in Edinburgh, Staffa is the main object, and to see as much more as possible.—Lord G. laughs much at the idea of my being turned loose upon the Land o' Cakes, as he presumes to say: I don't believe that land will care much; and I learn from Mrs. U., that in the wilder parts we go to, they can confer much upon us, but we can repay nothing, as English tourists, in general, give a great deal of trouble from their ignorance and want of arrangement.

• Lady Mary's favours threw all our friends about us last night, and the congratulations were endless. 'I don't know, Jane, if it is peculiar to me, but I cannot feel so happy as I ought: it looks stupid, too, but a wedding is a very dull thing, and it is provoking to be so congratulated when one feels out of spirit. This was the first I ever had any interest in: I hear so much good of Lord T——, I hope Mary will be happy.

I am sorry you were hurried out of town, and my share in this season will be almost as small as your own, as we set out next month. Sir Henry hurries us off, as he says Scotch sun won't wait for us. I wish my uncle could have accompanied us; Frederick, however, and Maria are perfectly happy with the idea of this journey. Adieu, dear Jane.

Yours, Lucy M.

LETTER II.

Lady S. to her Daughter, Lady T.

May 20.

CALAIS, my dear Mary, received us last night, after a tedious passage. I shall hope to hear from you when we reach Paris. Your father and the girls unite in kindest love. I must have a full account of your country residence, your neighbourhood, and every thing. When you return to town I shall hear of your *début* from my sister E., who, I hope, will remain long enough to see you presented.

Adieu, my dear child, with best wishes to Lord T.

Your most affectionate mother,

G. S.

LETTER III.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

JUNE 3.

I HAVE one or two pleasant parties, my dear Jane, before I leave town; and, last night, we had the Prince's box, and saw Miss O'Neill quite at our ease. I enjoy a tragedy, when one has not a mob of talkers: it was *Isabella*. I do think, at the moment she forgets her horrid situation, in the joy with which she clings to her former husband, it is the most heart-rending power of feeling one can imagine. The bridal-dress of the yesterday wife, and all the wretchedness she has brought upon herself, before our eyes, in contrast to this transport of joy, is to me a thousand times more affecting than any mad scene; that is, beyond what can be supposed your own case. This comes home with dreadful force to every breast. I am ashamed to say how much it overcame me.

Mamma carried home a few friends to supper • and to-morrow, if it is fine, we go to Richmond, to spend the day: it is one of those all-day parties that means any thing, and is pleasant when town is hot and dusty. I never felt so warm a May as we have had. •

My brother E. is gone abroad for a year and a half, he says, but I hope he will not stay so long: he is to join Lord and Lady S. at Rome or Naples, wherever he may find them. Adieu, dear Jane.

Yours, LUCY M.

LETTER IV.

Lady Lucy M. to Sir Henry.

Edinburgh, July, 18—

I CANNOT forget the kind tax you laid upon me, my dear uncle, when you presented that comfort of my life in Harley-street: such a store of good and useful writing materials would tempt any one, who had less inclination than I have, to oblige you. As you tell me you never crossed the Tweed; I hope my having done so may afford you some amusement; but pray remember I am a young tourist, and what I describe may have no merit of novelty, except to myself, as it has been all told so often over, and so much better. I need say nothing of the North road, except its comforts, which really make travelling quite easy, even to such a novice. Mamma leaves all the interior arrangements to me, that I may gain a little experience on this tour; and you know we left all the female

train behind us; old Samuel and young Robert being our sole attendants: we feared Sam not being able for all the trunk strapping, and those other fatigues by sea and land, which we *intend* to experience. I was much amused by watching the revolving lights, which are kept in constant motion upon several points and islands, I believe, on account of the shipping: we saw them first coming over the high parts of Northumberland, and afterwards, as we travel late generally, we came to understand them better. But, at this rate, I shall never reach Edinburgh, so I leave even Alnwick Castle behind, and shall set you down safely at a comfortable hotel here. When the Regent's Bridge is open, the approach to this place, I suppose, will be the finest in the world, along a sort of terrace, upon the side of a hill; and at one point, my dear Sir Henry, I really wished for you, it is so commanding: the town lies before you, almost at your feet, and the sea stretched out, bounding the view on one side, with magnificent hills to the south. Whoever planned this had a painter's eye, I am sure. No wonder a native and a poet should call this "mine own romantic town;" for no place can owe more to situation;

and the irregular sort of browel in which the first part, or old town, has been huddled together in times of war and alarm, allows the eye to mark distinctly the happy effects of later times, when wealth, leisure; and taste, began their work. Bridges here, as in London, are not over a river, but, in three instances, more like streets upon arches over ravines, connecting different parts of the town. A minute description you must find elsewhere, but my own ideas upon the place must have a corner; and I, who have never seen any town except London, cannot help finding a singular contrast in Edinburgh. I conclude, as they have no parliament, the *beau monde* leave it at a natural season, and consequently it is reckoned empty; but I should think from the open space there is all through the new part, it never can appear the bustling place London does: to me it seems as if every one was walking for amusement, or stopping to talk to a friend, with no dread of jostling or being run over, rather than going about in the usual busy routine of town life. Even in what is called the High-street, I saw fully as many clusters of gentlemen talking as moving. The shop-people, too, have a quiet sort of indifference,

as to whether you buy or let it alone, that surprised your nieces, who often find it difficult to procure a moment's attention. In Bond-street, we are so oppressed by ribbon-men, if at a quiet time of day, that they bother us into taking what we don't want to have. One shop, to be sure, which I was told was the most fashionable, had a good deal of stir; and they seem all well filled.

We have met with uncommon kindness from the families that knew Mamma formerly, and were offered many more introductions than we could manage. Frederick has got one invitation to shoot in the Highlands, which, if our road carry us as far, will be a great pleasure to him. I was much pleased with Sunday: my dear uncle, we surely might take a lesson with advantage from Edinburgh in that respect:—no half-open shops; no running about with pies and batter-pudding smoking through the streets, and, above all, no appearance of *having done* ^{it} by three o'clock, as we have. We found evening service as well attended as the morning, and heard excellent preaching in two Scotch churches we were taken to. The bridges then did look very busy. The dress and appear-

ance of a whole population, all seeming cheerfully bent upon the real use of the day, I thought a more improving sight than a summer Sunday in the Parks. Walk they do in the evening; and Calton Hill, I think it is called, was sprinkled with large parties; but no crowds of carriages marked an assembly, or party of any kind; and, I am told, the season of the year makes no difference in that respect. So, my dear uncle, I am obliged to own this capital may set us some useful examples; and with this moral reflection I had best conclude; and do not fear my dwelling upon any other place as long; but recollect, dear Sir Henry, your own words; "Don't run, like a fool at nineteen, through Scotland, without carrying away one new idea, but such as a print-shop could furnish: tell me what you find new in character and customs, what better, what worse, than at home. Now, child, take my blessing, and keep your eyes open to lose nothing."

Adieu, your most affectionate niece,

LUCY M.

LETTER V.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Edinburgh, July 3. 18—

I DARE say, dear Jane, you thought my last as stupid as any page out of a Tour through Scotland you ever heard. Merely describing a town may be so, and yet one must be a Goth to pass over this beautiful place in silence. Perhaps its “Manners and Customs,” which ought to be placed at the head of my next chapter, may amuse you better; and one they have that I am delighted with, which is, that with a brother, sister, or female friend, a young woman may walk through the whole of this town with perfect propriety. The first time I enjoyed this liberty, oh! how I danced along Prince’s Street, my bonnet and hair all blown about with the wind in my face; and you meet groupes of young people, all mirth and bloom, chatting and laughing with their acquaintances, and

appearing to enjoy life in a way quite unknown to our circle of *haut ton* in the South. Compared with the active bounding step of the Scotch ladies, what a dawdle our pace is, when, (turned out of our carriages,) in the Park, we parade with footmen and lap-dogs. By the bye, I don't know where they air their dogs here, I must have that enquired into: I suppose the reason I don't see them with the ladies, is because they walk without servants to look after them. How sick I used to be of grandmamma's Snatchet, Tomtit, and Funnyface; yet, you know, as regularly as the carriage drove to the door, the dogs jumped in.

One of the favourite walks here, at this season, is Queen's Street; and I made Frederick take three turns with me there last night, in hopes I might catch a glimpse of one of those wicked Scotch reviewers. I am certain I did see one, with clear blue eyes, a sharp nose, and a sort of knit in the brow, which must belong to the man who could say, "Sweet-smelling flowers, and beautiful young ladies, were among the most useless things in God's creation."

Lord! what a rage we were in! don't you remember?

We set out to-morrow, and, I believe, go direct to Staffa; and Mamma says we have much to see that is beautiful before we reach it. I regret being only a week here, as it seems a doubtful point our returning. You may figure us setting off with quantities of those beautiful Tartans flying about the back of the carriage; for old Sam has a pride, I see, in dressing, as well as packing, the carriage; and, I am told, all English tourists are known by the Plaid, as they call it, being displayed so as to look as much, what they suppose, like Scotch people as possible; then the tumbling in of books, writing-cases, and portfolios, with the space Frederick's ~~dirty~~ gun-case takes, is a work of some nicety. The distinguishing marks of a return-party from a Highland tour are sometimes curious enough; and they say at our hotel, a gentleman arrived last year with a live eagle strapped on the back of his carriage; but I own I cannot believe that.

A-propos to these tartans, they are beautifully displayed from a corner shop, near a whole

cluster of hotels; and, I suppose, as regularly expand their glowing colours there, as the butterflies in your flower-garden every season.

Adieu, dear Jane :. I don't promise a regular journal; but you shall receive from my travels as much pleasure as pen and ink can convey, which, you observe, implies I shall have a large share myself.

Ever affectionately yours,

LUCY M.

LETTER VI.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Edinburgh, July

WE saw two beautiful places yesterday, eight and twelve miles from here: they belong to the Earls Roseberry and Hopetoun, and form a striking contrast: the first, Dalmany Park, has a newly finished house, most highly ornamented, quite sunk in wood, with magnificent and extensive grounds skirting the sea, and except the house, all appears above a century old; in fact, there are no grounds, but all is park-scenery. Hopetoun House stands alone, in simple grandeur, to command your undivided attention; what wood is seen, only serves as a background: you approach the palace, for it is more one than any house I ever saw, by a sea-terrace, and come directly in front of it (being up an ascent) so gradually, that you have leisure to see the full *façade* as you approach: it

appears old, and its magnificence rests upon its simplicity and extent of building. Two colonnades, of I suppose twenty pillars each, connect very fine buildings, one stables, the other a riding-house.

As it was under repair, we went no farther than the entrance-hall, which is marble, and opens upon a flight of the broadest steps I ever saw, where I sat for a little while contemplating the view. We were most fortunate in weather, and from where I rested all was gay, as sea, boats, islands, and pointed headlands, could make it. The suites of rooms which opened on all sides of this hall appeared magnificent; but masons and plasterers had full possession, to our exclusion.

I saw here, for the first time, a quantity of Highland ponies; and if each pony has a rider, the next generation is well provided for. The grounds are very fine, in a mixed state between the formality of the old, and the trim neatness of the new style of modern gardens. The park lies on sloping ground to the sea, and we saw some beautiful deer. I met a very old man, who told me he had been with

three Earls; and I dare say I might have heard much of the days of "Good Earl John" being better than the present, had Mamma not been in a hurry to reach the carriage, as she had walked so much, so I left my old friend basking in the sun where I found him. We have also seen the Duke of Buccleugh's and Marquis of Lothian's; but as you have heard much of them from Lady Ann, I need not describe them.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER VII.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Audiencapell, July, 18--.

I FIND we have made a little mistake, and got to this place without seeing Loch Lomond, but that will be remedied after. Dumbarton is a very beautiful spot: the Castle is so singular, that we stood upon the bridge to draw it; and Maria is fortunate in such a frontispiece for her Scotch portfolio. Driving along the Clyde of a fine evening to this place is one of the most varied beautiful roads I ever saw: we got in late, and fortunately found this house empty, as we mean to stop a couple of days.

Roseneath is one of the Duke of A-----'s seats, and a very beautiful house; we wandered about a long while, and returned again to it to-day: you go by water from the inn. I cannot write a tour, my dear Jane, so you must fancy all I omit. The mountains here are mountains

indeed, such as none of us ever saw ; and Mamma, though born in Scotland, left it in the days when travelling was seldom thought of, and never had set foot in the Highlands before ; and it is so delightful to see her as much a stranger as we are. We all run about and feel so free, dear Jane : and Mamma's way of stopping when any thing pleases us has many advantages, — Maria draws, Frederick fishes, and I gossip with you.

I have taken three days to write this. We went to church to-day ; and I am certain it was Jeanie Dean's own Mr. Butler's church. The situation is just such as the author of those tales must have fixed upon. Mamma was seated at an open window at the head of the Duke's family *loft*, as they call a gallery. Trees hang quite over this church ; and the sea rolls so near, that the waves may be heard in regular succession during the whole service. We mean to keep to our church plan wherever we stop on Sunday. I like the simple Scotch service ; and voices, though without harmony, have something so earnest and devout, that I do not miss the organ as much as I expected.

We begin to-morrow to climb hills, and such hills! I shall write next from Inverary. We are already a week from Edinburgh, as we spent two days seeing Glasgow. Adieu.

L. M.

I should have said something of Glasgow; but it was so hot, and the manufactories had such a stuffy feel, I was not very much delighted: it is a pretty town.

LETTER IX.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Thursday, near Inverary.

YOUR idea of being pastoral among Scottish mountains, is so laughable a contrast, my dear Jane, to the real state of the case here, that I must introduce to you a herd, which means a shepherd or cattle-tender, a wild looking boy or girl wrapped up close in a Highland plaid of the coarsest kind, but much more suited

to the climate than your white draperies, straw hats, and pea-green ribbons, pet lamb, and all the arrangement your fancy has suggested. If you will put up your white silk parasol, and sit under it, on a mountain-side, you may pass for a plump, well-grown mushroom, at a little distance; nothing more dignified, I assure Your Ladyship; and you would suppose all the tumble-about stones you see ready to crush you by the slightest touch in a moment. By stones, I mean rocks, much of the same size as the dome of St. Paul's, which lie in all directions, and sometimes are called rocking-stones, from the way in which they seem to hang, self-poized in air.

The language, I am told here, is not Scotch in general, but translated Gaelic, of course a bad English; but I sometimes find pure Scotch, and very musical it is. I used to connect something low and vulgar with the idea of what I am talking of as pure Scotch. You are rather a word-fancier, like myself, dear Jane, so I will give you a few that struck me. *Flotquhaye*, a dish of floating curds and cream, with oatmeal: and when I wished to make a maid of one of the inns understand I was asking for a night-

light, she said, "Oh! it will be 'a *procket*;' but we have none:"—this means a taper: a *lincha* for a child's bandage.

Pray, for a meadow, is evidently taken from the French; also *couche*, to a dog, when desired to lie down. *Plenyn*, to complain, must be French too, and many more. When I heard a woman complain of last season as a bad one, I thought there was something of much meaning in her saying, "The corn was *boss*," this means empty. A *pudding-filler* is a term of reproach; and *bield* means shelter. When a master is talked of as hard, they add, "But we must keep by the wall that gives the *bield*,"—protection, I suppose, it rather means. For pleasuring or country parties, they have various names: *joy*, as a farewell evening, I remember particularly.

All their fairs seem to have saints' names; but it sounds rather odd to give these saints markets, when their worldly business is all over. I heard a person date a thing by St. John's Market, All-hallow Fair, and so on; but I suppose fairs and markets are one and the same thing; and the Saint is kind enough to overlook this trifling error, which must have

crept in. Since these were religious days only, amusement may be supposed to go along with the old occasions of invoking aid; but it is rather a lowering idea to suppose a bargain made under such auspices. I was told of *elf-shots*, which was some other affair connected with the spiritual world, but I did not understand it; however, we know elf is a fairy; and as there are bows and arrows which do mischief in the regions below, so they may have shot also. A lady has promised me a book upon these mysteries, which you shall have a peep into, if you deserve it, by showing becoming patience with all my Scotch letters.

Only suppose me upon the banks of the Tiber, or among the Greek islands, and you would be truly envied so minute a correspondent.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER X.

To Lady Jane, from Lady Lucy M.

Inverary, July, 18—

I INTENDED, last night, to have written all my admiration of this beautiful place to you, my dear Jane, but I was too tired ; and this morning we were called early on board a revenue-cutter, which Mamma had got the offer of, to give us a day's sailing. Wind and tide, you know, admit of no delay, so we did not even wait to read our letters, but carried them unopened on board, and I seated myself in a snug corner to enjoy mine, as I had not received any since I came north before. Yours, one from Susan, and, though last, not least, a packet sealed with—what do you think? I won't tell yet. These were my share: Mamma, luckily, had hers ; and Frederick and Maria were engaged after their own devices, drawing, and dressing fish-hooks. This last packet was one on which I have heard are ge-

nerally stamped, Cupids, hearts, and darts; for, to be plain, my dear, it was a love-letter, and sealed by the old heavy arms and coronet of no less a person than the Earl of ———, who, it seems, from various twitches about the left side, has discovered that a certain Lucy M. would prove an acceptable appendage to his establishment; were she induced, by a few considerations, which are pointed out, to smile upon his suit. I shall mention only two of these: one temptation offered is, that his children, shall be all packed out of my way, as lumber, among their aunts; and, with the balance of thirty years on his side, he suggests I might survive him, and makes me sure, in that case, of four of his substantial thousands a year, at his death. We are told that the little God is blind; but the bandage must have been applied thicker than usual, if he did not see this was telling me in plain terms, I was a cold, heartless wretch, who would neglect his daughters, and rejoice in the hopes of a merry widowhood. Mad-cap as I may appear, if I ever become the wife of a man who had a family, I should take the greatest pleasure in attaching them to me; and

had he not added this, I should have considered at least I was much honoured by such proposals. I conclude the jointure matter is always talked of, when ladies are expected to consult their interest more than their affections; so I take less offence at that: and no man whom I could love, would have added that inducement. I need tell you no more than that as, piece by piece, I tore the letter, and let it drop into the sea, I was startled by the sudden appearance of the identical Phoca of the Antiquary, who put up an ugly head, like a great bull-dog, out of the water, and seemed to catch at some of the paper, as it floated off. Frederick would have been a capital Hector, but his gun was left behind, as he intended to fish; and they are not fond of guns being fired before the herring season.

I shall say nothing to Mamma at present; and neither you nor the Phoca will blab. A decided *No* shall not be wanting, you may believe.

The sea was calm, and the whole day's work very agreeable: though all novices, we were not bad sailors, and returned rather late. Maria's journal will give you all I ought to have said

of Inverary: it is grand and beautiful, and the house has every possible comfort. I shall propose to some of the Lords and Commoners to have an act passed to oblige all proprietors, both south and north, once in three years, to see their own leaves upon their own trees.

Wednesday Morning.— Maria came in, in great delight, just now, to say three seals had been seen quite white when she and Frederick were on the beach: I conclude one of them acted the part of the mermaid Kitty G—— told us so much of that year she was in this part of Scotland.

Adieu, my dear; I shall probably write next from Oban, as we are now to penetrate into a much wilder world: as yet, we have met with nothing to check our enjoyment in the beautiful scenes we have passed through. Adieu.

L. M.

LETTER XI.

Lady S. to Lady T.

August.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

WHILE all the party are in great confusion I have found a corner to write to you. We are stopped by a wheel breaking, at a village within twenty miles of Naples, and it is necessary to unpack the whole carriage, to secure our property during the repair; for a wheel cannot be taken off and mended and a carriage locked up as in England; so I make a virtue of necessity, and wish I could write of grapes, flowers, sunshine, and beautiful sea-views peeping between groves of the finest chesnuts, in a way to give you the least idea of all we saw to-day: there is sufficient to delight the eye here, were one confined only to an hour's drive. Yet I miss the look of comfort which a gentleman's place at a distance gives—some one who might be Lord of

such a Manor, and reduce the frightful extent of misery which the peasants labour under. But we hear all that makes no difference upon the gay bustle of Naples, where light-hearted beggary sings all day over, either regardless of sufferings shared by so many, or to hide their own portion from themselves. Poor wretches!

Naples. — I have only time to say we reached this in safety; and a most splendid scene it is.

God bless you, my dear child.

Your ever-attached Mother.

LETTER XII.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Near Glencoe, August, 18—

OF your many unanswered questions, my dear Jane, I find the state of modern songs is one; you cannot have a more beautiful specimen than those in the *Lady of the Lake*: my favourite certainly is, "The heath this night must be my bed." The maiden's wail that "Wilt not waken me, Mary," is beautiful: but I heard one sung here, which, as the scene of action lies close by, I found a great favourite, and it is droll at least. I have not the words, but am told they are printed: it represents the very shrew Kate turned loose among the High'ands, who, instead of employing her slender fingers upon the trifling exertions of tearing hair and scratching out eyes, being more robust I suppose, has a mighty pretty plan of her own, of crushing her lover's family in their castle, by pulling down

their highest mountain over their heads, turning back the finest river in the Highlands into its parent lake, hurling the eagles from their nests to smother young swans, (though I must do her the justice to say she catches up the cygnets to nurse upon the rock meanwhile,) and such like prodigies, besides spitefully taunting her father and brothers in their bragues about turning before the foeman's steel: all this is to happen before she will say, "Just as papa and mamma pleases," to the young lord.

The conclusion, however, is much after Shakespeare's plan; but it appears an old bard sat laughing at her all the while: these were cunning old rogues; and for all their harps and white locks, they never lost a sly hit at the ladies when opportunity offered. I hope, dear Jane, you have as much time to read as I to write to-day, for here follows five hundred wise remarks upon popular songs, being the best clue to manners; and though that cannot just be said here, yet the perfectly just descriptive parts of this and other songs must make them interesting. And I,—now comes the pompous traveller,—“who had so lately seen the eaglets taken from their downy nests

sucking the lambkins' blood and crackling their bones."—Before all, "The mercy on us, is she gone crazy?" that will follow this remark, be pleased to breakfast with me at ———, with the Laird of B.'s family: numbers make on difference at that hospitable board, so you may all walk in; and after the first dish of tea the door opens, and "May I come in this figure, sister?" introduces a handsome young Highlander, just returned from his morning's sport, in full costume, with a gun in one hand and a basket covered with heath in the other. "So you have got them," was echoed from all quarters: "pray present them to Lady Lucy; I am certain at least she never had such an offering laid upon her table at breakfast before." He came forward, having thrown aside the shot-bag and gun. "It is not loaded, father;" and falling into his sister's humour, very gracefully presented his basket, repeating,

"I have found out a gift for my fair;

I have found where the wood-pigeons breed:"

and all eyes being turned upon me and this mysterious basket, I uncovered it, and found two young unfledged eagles, all down and soft-

ness, but with the claw and beak, which proved their birth and parentage. It was, to my ignorant eyes, a very interesting sight. This youth had been out all night, and with much difficulty the young had been taken out of the nest, at four o'clock in the morning, by a man let down an immense way, while my young friend shot the mother: this is done, or attempted to be done, every year for the protection of game and lambs. Moor-game and lambs' bones were found, as the last little *déjeuné* of these downy dears.

You'll not believe me till you find me under your window some fine morning in —— Square, about St. Valentine's day, with my gipsy hat tied down, in Tartan silk, adding to the London cries,

Come buy my pretty Eaglets,
 My pretty, pretty Eaglets,
 Where heath-bells bloom
 With sweet perfume
 I caught my pretty Eaglets,
 My pretty pretty Eaglets :
 Come buy my pretty Eaglets.

Yours,
 L. M.

LETTER XIII.

Mrs. H. to the Countess of E.

Hastings, August.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR accounts from Scotland are very amusing; but I am sorry you appear to have missed a spar cave that I hear wonders of from a lady here: where it is exactly, I do not know; but near Mull, I think. I met Lord ——— and his daughters a few days ago, at dinner, and he enquired much about you, and particularly Lady L. He surely does not mean to marry again? But he talked of Lady L—— in quite a lover-like way for a man of his age, but appeared much out of spirits. His daughters are sweet girls, and the eldest appears quite womanly. I do not find Lady Georgina polishes my company; she has got some new friends, whom she tells me understands her better than I do, and are all soul. These all-soul people,

particularly as there is a brother in this bunch of friends, always excite a little jealousy with me; but if she will not listen to me I cannot help it. I saw our friends, the M——ss's, and find them all as usual. What a set of madcaps! they are all agog to run from place to place all Summer. Bathing is the present rage, and going out in boats, buying trifles at the French women's booths; for you know, I suppose, that eggs and poultry brought from France, means lace and gloves: I often think they are English, after all. But buying even French shells for ladies' work, is better, if you wish to be *à-la-mode*, than nothing. However, that saves the rubbish they make cleaning English ones, which is even dirtier than shoe-making in a drawing room. Since the days of our grandmothers, what various devices have been fallen upon to keep women from idleness. I don't know how it succeeded then, but this is, of all ages, the idlest; and I think the girls will soon resemble the Turkish women, and do nothing but dress, and attitudinize: and, indeed, when I see a book in their hands, I think it poison. What can be worse than Lord B.'s poems? But this is an old

- subject of debate; and with all our books upon education we still want something, which, I fear, I am not wise enough to supply. I could not be as much *incog.* as I intended; but the gay part of the world don't much affect me.

Yours,

Dear Lady. E.

With much esteem,

H.

LETTER XIV.

*Lady S. to Lady T.**

Naples. No date.

MY DEAREST DAUGHTER,

IT is one of my favourite amusements to transport myself to England, and see you at the head of your family; and I believe there are few more difficult situations than being the hostess of a country-house, open at all times to an influx of society. So young as you are, my dear child, and both Lord T. and yourself inexperienced in that sort of life, I particularly advise you to give no rash invitations to those whom you were merely acquainted with in town: it has often been repented of by others, as affording shelter to a class of society who make their supposed intimacy in your house a passport to others; and that there are those, both male and female, willing, by talent and flattery, to fill up the background, so as they

may be seen upon the same canvass with you, a very short knowledge of the world will soon show you. But, my dear child, avoid all such; or, if unawares you have admitted such doubtful characters, keep them at arm's-length. The all-alluring name of "Talent" has gained a place to many they very little deserved; and the ready art of flattering a weakness, or relieving you from the *ennui* of being yourself the entertainer of your company, has retained it, even after you might be sensible by what arts it was gained. Imperceptible, my dear child, are the steps by which the moral tone of a family may be lowered; but, believe me, it is lowered: ridicule is thrown upon what is right, and a gloss given to what is wrong, before you are sensible of it; while those mix under your roof with the hope of bringing you down to their own level: this is particularly likely to happen in country intimacy. An idle hour is to be passed; and those are most popular who manage that best: and that "we could better spare a better man," is truly allowed by those who feel the loss of talents when gone, that have amused that part of your society who

hung heavy upon your hands as well as on their own. Strive, my dear child, with every proper intercourse which your situation calls for with the world, so to study nature, that all its plausibilities may be unable to blind you to the really bad in character. It is on first setting out in life only you can shake off such; and let my experience be your guide.

All of us unite in affectionate wishes; and believe me

Your most attached mother,

G. S.

LETTER XV.

(FIRST LETTER FROM THE FOOT OF GLENCOE.)

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Begun at Oban, a little Inn near
 the sea, before we go up Glen-
 coe, August, 18—

I HAVE seen so much, my dear Jane, and all so new, that perhaps you may have too much of “the sublime and beautiful;” but I shall compress these mountains, and seas, and islands, into smaller space than they ever expected to be squeezed, for your sake. My last, an age ago, was from Inverary; and partly from choice, partly from necessity, we have been all this while in reaching this spot; but that time shall be accounted for as much to your satisfaction, I hope, as it has been to mine. In the first place, Frederick joined a party who belonged to the cutter I mentioned, and sailed through many an intricate maze, to reach us at

Oban, which kept us a week waiting for him. If you can take patience to look through a Scotch map, look at Inverary *via* Sea, and find the next point, Oban; and with some calms, and some contrary winds, you will see it was a cause of delay. Mamma was a little nervous at letting him go, but as she knew the captain of the vessel by name and report, she submitted, and we parted. Our route lay through a very wild scene indeed, till we came in sight of a lovely lake, and reached Dalmally: there we had some puzzle about beds, and that being over, we strolled about, and picked up an acquaintance with the old clergyman of the place, who appears to have got acquainted with many travelling parties, whom his hospitality had sheltered when the inn was full. He desired us to observe a fine old castle in ruins, which we should see next day: we had noticed it before, but he made it more interesting by some old stories he told us about it. The old gentleman has a pretty church; he says it was the taste of his young Lord; but who that Lord may be, I either did not hear, or have forgot. Next day really was a day of wonder. this lake

widens out beautifully, and has a number of islands; but what enchanted me most, was the burst of the river along which we travelled from the lake, rushing to the sea; more, I should think, like one in America than in Great Britain. No wonder the Scotch call our rivers lazy: I do believe the Awe has made more rushing noise in one week of its course, than every river in England during the last twenty years: the tremendous mountains it seems to have forced its way through, and the ever-rolling side of one at least which appeared to crumble down as we stood gazing at it, was a scene absolutely — I was going to say — frightful; but I enjoyed it, though almost dumb with surprise, too much to feel alarm. I expect this to be classed among travellers' wonders, but I cannot help that. We baited at a sweet little place, kept by a handsome Lancashire witch. They have a horrid custom here of burning down whole beautiful woods into charcoal; and a company from England live here, employed in this manufacture: that, were it done upon my property, would drive me mad; but I am told some old bargain, which cannot now be

broken, obliges the owner to submit; and that he and his lady live almost within sight, and, as Mrs. Proctor said, are no more fond of the company than I am. You, ignorant girl, perhaps may not know that charcoal is not required alone by French cooks, but for smelting iron; and if you don't know what that means, I must send you back to Magnal, or some such obliging author, for information; as I must hurry on to Oban. In doing so, we saw a fearful ferry, which even made my stout heart quake, when I was told it rolled between us and my favourite plan of seeing Glencoe: it is quite a rapid, foaming and dashing in such a way as I had no notion of the sea doing, when not against a shore; but, for our comfort, it varies with high and low tide.

, Adieu. I see this sheet cannot carry me even to Oban, much less to Staffa, so I release you for the present. Adieu once more.

L. M.

LETTER XVI.

(SECOND LETTER FROM THE FOOT OF GLENCOE.)

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Foot of Glencoe, August, 18—

WE reached Oban very wearied, man, woman, and horse, as it was a long day's work; and we were not over-pleased with our reception when we got there. Filth, I must say, can never be patiently borne, when one cannot remedy it. The common plan of carrying sheets is quite needless; they can always be got clean: but clean floors, clean food, and sweet smells, with fresh air, would be agreeable, if they could be unpacked with ourselves. However, as grumbling does no good, we opened windows, and bustled about to make the best of it; and after we were once here, we lived in a boat, as we staid longer than we intended, and got a lesson upon parting company we shall

profit by. Why should sea-ports, as I am told, be always dirty to a proverb? Surely as much overflowing water might make a place sweet and clean. But as this is the first I ever spent a night in, I am perhaps abusing it and its fellows beyond their desert. The only variety here was Edward G—— sailing in, one day, to our great delight. He was on a return party from Staffa, and gave us many useful hints. He staid but a day; however, on that day, he contrived a pretty trick for us, at an old chapel near a rock here, which has a most remarkable echo. I must refer you to Maria's journal for such little interludes, and pass over the time till Frederick joined us, and we set sail for Staffa. The weather had been showery and blowy, but cleared up as we reached Mull. All the difficulties of crossing that island were repaid by a successful landing at Staffa; and a wonderful place it is. There are many views and accounts of it; so I shall only add my testimony, that if all between London and that island was a blank, it is worth coming on purpose. The broken pillars, the sea-fowl, and the regular break of the sea after

you row in towards the caye, is really sublime. My dear Jane, I say so, taking it for granted, that those who are to enjoy it have cast away all silly fears, and go unprejudiced, and have also neither wind nor sea sickness to struggle with. In health and spirits as we were, it was, I must repeat, sublime; such as we never saw or perhaps never shall see; and the feeling of being so seen, for the only time of our lives, added, I suppose, as much to our pleasure as it did to our regret on quitting it, after being assured we had landed on every point where any new view of this extraordinary island was to be seen. We made them row us slowly off; and while Maria took a few sketches, in silence we left the island of Staffa, as a friend to whom you cannot muster up courage to say, Farewell. All the Mull part of the excursion I pass over: it was more fatiguing than interesting; and we got back to Oban in three days; and the bustle of packing, and setting off, was serious, as we were assured we had many difficulties, and little comfort, between us and Glencoe: however, to it we resolved to go, and got over ferries in safety, where you would sup-

pose carriages had never gone before. It is ill managed, I must say, if the proprietors ever travel these roads, not to look to comfort and bare convenience a little more. No piers or landing-places, and not even shelter for horses, (never for carriages); and I might, perhaps, if I continued this strain, depart from my own rule, of not grumbling too far: so here we arrived, my dear, having remained at a cottage-fire a whole night, from the absolute impossibility of getting the horses on. I believe, in such cases, most people send, and boldly ask at some gentleman's house to be taken in; but we could not do so, and only sent to beg our horses might get a night's lodging, which was most readily granted; and these four animals, I dare say, were very happy. This occurred at a place called Appin, from whence, in the morning, we had a beautiful view: but if you won't repeat it, perhaps hot rolls and butter, at that time, would have been more agreeable than any view.

We reached at last this most beautiful scenery, but with the usual wants! Bread was to bake, and fish to catch, and so forth; and, worse than all! they did not understand us, or

we them. However, all this came right at last; and as fine fish, and as good cheer, as hungry people could desire, was set before us. Baking bread, my dear, does not imply loaves: there is no bread of that kind ever seen here. The nearest baker is at Fort-William, twenty or twenty-five miles off. What does it mean, then? Why that is a secret you will learn if you ever travel here; and where good-will is so readily shown in producing what they have, I for one shall never blab of what they have not: for, be it known to you, my dear, the woman of one of these houses, for we slept in two parties, with a ferry betwixt us, would not be prevailed upon to make a charge, and all we could do was to give her maid money, and of a handful of silver, she kept half-a-crown, and returned the rest; — and this happened in an inn, so called, not a private house, but where people only stop from necessity, not choice, it appears; and I shall never forget, that I have once met with a class of people in such low life, above taking advantage of that necessity. Better beds or linen I never saw; and, as I said before, we had plenty to eat. When I tried to

force payment upon her, the woman absolutely had tears in her eyes; and I understood from one of the post-boys, she said she was affronted, — this means ashamed, — that she *could* do so little for us, but would not touch our money.

Adieu. The wonders of Glencoe lie before me. I send off this by a foot-post, which goes to-morrow.

Yours ever,

LUCY M.

I forgot to say, the ferry had lost all its terrors with a full tide.

LETTER XVII.

Lady S. to Lady T.

Naples. No date.

I AM truly sorry, my dear child, for the picture you give me of your young friend's married discomforts. I cannot, you know, judge under what views she changed her situation; but such disappointments are more often to be attributed to overstrained ideas of what marriage ought to be, and some romance as to our own powers of conferring perfect happiness, than to the reality of the evils she so feelingly disclosed. You must not be offended if I say your friend appeared to me to have more sensibility than sense; and having been considered what is called a beauty, I am not prepared to bestow all the compassion you do upon her present discontents: but since you desire to have her upon the list of my patients, I shall prescribe to the best of my power. I must first say, then, when her hus-

band comes home ruffled by some circumstance he has met with in the world, and she flies up with a kiss, which she finds not very tenderly received, she must be content to be called a "fond fool," or to keep her kisses till a better opportunity. Going to her room to cry is childish; a man of sense will soon tire of that trick: and all the rose-water you tell me she employs to wash her eyes to make her "decent for dinner," would be better employed brushing up those pretty ringlets of hers; which, if they adorn the smiling looks he used to find before her marriage, will sooner restore his cheerfulness, than all the parade she makes of smothered feelings. Don't, my dear, be taken in by all this stuff. Compare the difference of a sensible woman receiving her husband in good humour or bad, without teasing him with silly questions about what he is resolved she shall not know, and having temper and understanding to soothe what may be amiss, or to partake of what may be agreeable at the moment,—and you will judge which of these women have the best chance of happiness: and those ladies who talk of their smothered feel-

ings, always contrive to let enough escape to prove to him she is doing so. A man who is affectionate and kind-hearted must feel this; and do you suppose he will be the more attached to her after she has made him feel he has hurt her? By so doing, she lessens him in his own eyes, and he will naturally feel less happy in her society, than with those who treat him with smiles and consideration; which, probably, he has only to step into his carriage, and find in half-a-dozen well-lighted rooms, open to receive all husbands under similar feelings during the evening. You may say, "But no one there has such cause of complaint:"—cause or no cause, we must manage husbands as they are, not as they ought to be, when we meet with such; and there are endless ways by which women, through their own folly, condense the cloud into a storm, which they might, by one cheerful ray of good feeling, have dispelled at first; but this implies a little more self-discipline than, I imagine, your friend has ever put in practice.

I fear, on looking over this, my prescription may not be very palatable; but unless you

prove to me she is willing to take the bitter with the sweet, I can have nothing more to do with her.

I wish I could fill your conservatory, my dear, from hence, such profusion of all those flowers you delight in are lavished upon every peasant's dwelling here: yet there is a sort of mockery in this; for the wretched state of those who breathe "perfume in every gale," might lead me to follow the moral strain beyond what you would find amusing. Adieu.

LETTER XVIII.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Killin. August 27th.

GLENCOE surpassed all my expectations; but I remember to have seen a very exact representation of it at the Exhibition, by, I think, a Mr. Yathsmith*, or some such name: and we drove up this magnificent glen before six o'clock in the morning. The rich tinge of a morning sun, and the singular points of the hills, had, all together, a charming effect. Add to all the effect of scenery, we took care to be well-informed as to the spot where the massacre took place, and so lost none of the interest of this wilderness of broken mountains. We walked up a great part of it, and I had the misfortune, in climbing up a little rock off the road to see a goat and two kids, to sprain my ankle; but old

Naythsmith, of course.

Sam, who is a bit of a doctor, prescribed as well as the materials of Mamma's little medicine-chest would admit, and so I hope it will not very much interfere with my active share in this really delightful journey. We saw such mountains, indeed, all through Argyleshire: they are of a prodigious height and size, and some beautifully pointed. This glen, I believe, is partly in Inverness-shire.

Three hours and a half of climbing brought us to a solitary house, dignified with the name of The King's House. I suppose travellers, in general, find the negatives greater here than elsewhere; but at present it is the resort of gentlemen for sport; and, though not composed of the usual bill of fare of a breakfast-table, we had a capital *déjeuné*. You know it is quite correct and in good taste to talk of that repast *à la fourchette* at two or three o'clock; and those who ascend Glencoe before ten, will have good reasons of their own to prefer the *fourchette* to any other weapon, offensive or defensive, they might meet with, provided the *gibier* is as good and plenty as we found it.

Lord ———, or his servants, most obligingly contributed to our necessities. I think I see a willingness to help each other through the Highlands, which, I doubt, we have yet to learn, and probably may never learn, as the circumstances are so different.

Maria has just looked over my shoulder, and says I must put my pen through "*or his servants,*" as she is quite sure they acted under a master's orders. General orders, I grant, may have so handsomely been acted under; but, on this occasion, all the party had gone to a distance at sun-rise, we heard.

A long, wild stage brought us to another solitary house, which, they say, is the highest inhabited spot in the Highlands. It is very wild, indeed; but such never-ending groupes of magnificent mountains, in a bright sunshine at this season, convey no feeling of its being dreary; and, indeed, I am so in love with the grand and great scale, I am in no haste to quit it, which, upon arriving here this morning, we find will, comparatively, soon be the case. As rest for my ankle, and to give the horses also a day's respite, Frederick has procured a couple of stout High-

landers with a boat, who^d undertake to deliver us at the end of the beautiful lake now in sight, almost at the threshold of our next inn; so the heavy baggage remains, under Sam, for a whole day behind us, as that time, and more, we find, may be well spent at Kenmore.

Addio; and express your gratitude for this short letter.

Yours ever,
L. M.

LETTER XIX.

Lady Lucy M. to Julia.

August. Scotland.

My sweet Julia, I am flattered by your confidence; and, since you do think of marriage, I shall give you the best advice in my power. I am not surprised that it should puzzle you: were I in your place, I should run my finger slowly down the peerage, and certainly would prefer a man who made me a duchess at once, unless you had any particular fancy for his son, then, indeed, you must take your own way; only recollect, there is no saying how slowly a duke dies. Just look in at ——'s, and you will find more than one faded portrait of a marchioness, which has stood there, waiting the last touch of ermine, for years. My sweet Julia, you are too well educated not to have heard all your life of a very good establishment, a monstrous good marriage; but are you quite, quite sure

you understand what this means? My careless Julia may really not exactly understand this: it means, my dear, having all your own way, titles, wealth, and so forth, in your husband; your own carriage; lots of pin-money at your own entire disposal; running bills to any amount besides, is quite your privilege; your box at the Opera, and any other little extra expence you may fancy; a couple of waiting maids, and a French laundress for your laces; town and country residences, and a trip to the Continent, at a moment's warning; if you make a party to your mind; and it means a long and happy reign over the world of fashion, with whom you may indulge every caprice you choose. Now the man whose coronet bestows all this upon you, must be a most enviable husband. I press this the more, my dear Julia, since I know what is called 'a good marriage in Scotland. It means, my sweet child, every misery on earth. Would you believe it, no one of these things ever were given to a wife in Scotland, since the Tweed separated the two countries: long may it flow between us and their good marriages! You are such a dear feeling soul, pray have Godfrey's

best by you, before you proceed, or I am sure you cannot read on : but if my Julia can command those ready tears of hers enough just to run over this, she will rejoice that she was born in the South. A good marriage in Scotland, means a man of your own age, with a very few thousands a year, six at most ; an old country-house, one carriage between her and him, and even that one may not always open : that is of less consequence, as there is nothing to see. In short, I can't calculate upon what she has *not*, but I know she can call nothing her own, but the man she marries. If she has a town residence, what good does that do her ? None on earth. She goes into the world, if world you can call their capital, as little noticed as the chair she fills ! Young and handsome as we are when we marry, and go into the world with every delicious idea of our place in society, we can hardly think, without shuddering, that not the least share of this belongs to a Scotch wife. A young married woman, hanging on the arm of a fashionable young man in the door-way of an assembly, never was seen, I suppose, or heard of, in Scotland. What is

even worse, when they drive out, no one thinks of riding up to the carriage, to have a little chat of the last night's party, or to make arrangements for the following evening, as we do in the Park. No;—if you will believe me, I myself saw a very fine looking young woman, I am sure not five-and-twenty, stop her carriage in George-street, a wide open street, such as Portland-place, where half the town might see her, to speak to her own husband!! and there was such a pap-pa-pa-pa from little heads, it was quite sickening; and this scene concluded by giving him handfuls of strawberries out of their baskets, as they had just returned from a fruit-garden. I could give you a thousand other instances, my sweet Julia, but shall only add a hint of their life, when they have no town-house, and live always in the country; yes, read that again, live the whole year round in the country. There they do so bustle; they must be so robust, and so hospitable, and think so much for others, and nothing at all about themselves. Lord, how you would pity them, my sweet Julia; you who, I suppose, never spent five minutes thinking *for* another in your life. I do assure you, Julia, one of your

most active mornings, when, laid upon your couch, you get over half-a-dozen pages of the last novel, talking of the head-ache, or any other ache, all the while to Fanchette, as she washes and combs your dog, being transferred to the dressing-room of a Scotch lady, be her rank what it might, I have no doubt would produce a separation instantly: no husband would submit to it for half an hour.

I conclude you require nothing more, my dear girl, to determine you at once to see the full advantage you possess, in having such choice, in fixing a happier lot for yourself.

Yours,

LUCY M.

LETTER XX.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Kenmore, August 29th.

• •

WE spent all this morning at a heavenly place called Taymouth; but my unlucky sprain obliged them to leave me seated on a mossy bank, beside the river. This river, dear Jane, is the Tay; and it is a much more simple affair being left for a couple of hours on a bank beside the Tay, than the Thames; so don't let your fancy run at the gallop upon proprieties, and the like. Frederick left me his Burns, to look out some lines he had read upon this place, and off they set. The day was delicious, and it was so shady, I threw off my bonnet, and pulled out of my—pocket! Oh! shocking, you wear one, do you? Yes, I do, and a larger one than your fashionable eyes ever saw, since I came down; and a great comfort it is. Then out of this repository of arts and sciences I pulled

your notes, and on looking them over, I saw one "Scotch cottages, nasty or not?" "children, dirty of course;" and some such of your usual impertinences. To please you, and myself also, I penetrated into several, and they do stand in need of some such ornaments as trellis, woodbines, and roses: but, dear Jane, you would forget all your fine-spun theories of the picturesque, when you found, as I did, of what materials their inhabitants are sometimes composed. And I will give you an instance, which may put us all to the blush: I found cheerful mothers and healthy children, old and young, and all, though not cleanly, yet contented and happy; at least, I never met with a complaint. One, where we asked for a bowl of milk, seemed to have a family rather of a better cast; and we sat down and chatted with them, and soon came to a good understanding. After a number of questions and replies, I asked, What does that press hold? "Jeanie, let the ladies see." Accordingly, blankets, provided for Jeanie's wedding I suppose, by the blush with which she folded them up again, when her mother called them her *providing*,

(the Scotch term for something very different from a thousand pounds worth of milliner's trumpery,) and other goods and gear were displayed: and the press was half closed, when the mother said, "Jeanie, show the bony claith:" a few yards of snow-white linen were unfolded; to be applied to what purpose, my dear Jane, 'do you think?—a winding-sheet: and the girl said very modestly, "I span it and bleached it myself, ladies, for my father and mother." Feeling, there certainly was; but I could not distinguish whether it arose from being obliged to speak of her share in this duty, or if it applied to its future destination. Now which of us would not have sickened at the sight of such a thing? I own I turned from it, as it was, with a faint shudder. I leave you to make your own reflections upon this, as I did, and return to my mossy couch, where I first began. °

I ran over Burns, of whose works I understand very little, but soon found what Frederick wanted;—and you may look them out for yourself. I did laugh, I own, at Nature's careless haste dropping these hills: no wonder, when

she had full leisure, she employed it upon some of those with the unpronounceable names we saw in Argyleshire. But the concluding lines are beautiful; whether true or not, must be left to be decided by wiser heads than mine: —

Here, to the wrongs of fate half reconciled,
 Misfortune's lightened steps might wander wild;
 And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
 Find balm to soothe her bitter rankling wounds.

It may be so; but if I know myself, I would be sooner soothed by one affectionate heart, than by all the beauties of inanimate nature. Not, you see, subscribing to the theory of my poet, I closed him; and having found at my foot a dandelion, in the happy state of down, to give me exact information upon a more interesting point, I began "Il m'aime" with great courage, and had just reached that provoking "point de tout," when a large water-dog, dripping from the river, gave itself a monstrous shake, and, making a snatch at my unfortunate bonnet, in an instant was again in the water, holding it, I must say, so high, as not to injure it at all; and he deposited it carefully in a nice

little boat on the opposite side, beside some fishing tackle. As most of those fetch-and-carry gentlemen have a master at hand, I resolved to keep quiet, and watch how he would receive this unlooked-for appendage to his concerns. The dog lay down ashore, and seemed to watch for some one, and a young man soon after gave a whistle, and called Bravo ! bravo ! and with a gun over his shoulder was preparing to step into the boat, when the bonnet caught his eye : he laughed, and called out, “ Oh ! I see the trick ;” but he soon found he must share the joke with his dumb companion, as no one else appeared : so I got up and waved my handkerchief, and he pushed over directly. The apologies and explanations which followed afforded us some amusement, you may suppose. He politely proffered me any assistance in his power, and said he was with a party from the other end of the lake, in quest of martin cats ; and seeing my astonishment at gentlemen being employed after cats, he went to the boat and brought one he had killed ;— a fierce but beautiful animal : its teeth, even though dead, were clenched in a frightful way. I told him, I only

wanted the return of my party from a longer walk than I could undertake; and we parted, he rowing his boat towards the lake, and I returning to the seat I had left. Now, my dear Jane, this was so nearly an adventure, it ought to please you; and if you think it was somewhat ungallant in my new acquaintance to leave me, (remark, I said nothing of my sprain — the idea of opodeldoc is so intimately connected,) I should have lost all the grace and picturesque effect of my situation.

I hope you have now a full understanding of the beauties of Taymouth; but the journal, my dear, the journal will fill up all these untold beauties: and, I confess, this might have been written from one of the ugliest, instead of the most beautiful spot, I dare say, in Britain.

Adieu. My hand is cramped, and my eyes go together. So, with a yawn, farewell.

LUCY M.

LETTER XXI.

Mrs. H. to the Countess of E.

Hastings, August.

MY DEAR LADY E.

I sit on the shore still, and am mourning over my mosaic snuff-box, which came from Italy within this month, and is seized by some lover of the Prince's mixture, I dare say, at Brighton; for I cannot recover it. Such trifles should pass. Your sister will be very sorry, and so am I.

I give up Lady E. as hopeless; and as I do not see much of the world, I can only tell you foolish tales of my poppets, who are as happy with their stores of shining marine jewels, as any birth-right lady, in our time, could be with hers. I got a box of books from my bookseller a few days ago, and though called new, I think are old things vamped up. When I was young, Sir Charles

Grandison lay for a whole summer's reading, and we sought nothing more amusing. I think it was as well: I now look upon it as a rignmarole of nonsense; but it was harmless nonsense at least. I looked into the library here, but could not find one of the authors I was in quest of; and a pert answer from one of the shopmen gave me to understand, they had no collection of books for old ladies. What a silly plan. We have lovely sunny days, but chill of an evening. I hope you wrap up well in Scotland, for damp air in that climate must be very hurtful. I regret I did not send you some of my favourite tincture, as a mouth-wash before going out in the mornings; but I suppose you always breakfast where you sleep, which is a great preservative. Do bring back Highland check. Some ladies here have cloaks they got from Scotland, which they use in going to bathe, that I admire greatly.

With my kind wishes to the young people, believe me, my dear Lady E.,

Your affectionate friend,

H.

LETTER XXII.

To Mrs. H. from Lady S

Naples. August, 18—

I OFTEN think it is a thousand pities that I had not been the first traveller since the days of Lady M. W. Montague, and I might have dipt my pencil in rainbow hues, and described, without wearying you, my perfect delight and enjoyment in this lovely country:—how I watched a setting sun; and how often I rose, and, in a loose mantle, took my station at the end of our terrace to see the rising sun. Little as that may suit modern habits, so it is; and, with my book for my companion, I often enjoy all that, with a relish which will outlive mere novelty. It is the more delightful to me, as morning and evening hours are all that can be enjoyed at this season.

Before I dress, I arrange breakfast. Now don't suppose this implies a rattle of cups

and saucers; it is quite a different ceremony here — a selection of the finest fruits, and the arrangement of them with flowers, which are all brought for my choice, as the markets are supplied in a morning; and the fruit and flower-women draw up at a very early hour indeed, till “the Signora” makes her appearance. The young people are, you may believe, delighted with this occupation also. Coffee, and some beautiful bread, and a light cake, finish the set-out of my table. Ice we reserve for the forenoon repast. After I dress, my Lord, who I rejoice to say gets daily better, is ready; and we are as sociable a party as you ever saw us in G—— Square. It is one of many of the blessings of early habits, uniting a family at breakfast: I think it forms a delightful link in the all-day chain of social feelings and affections. I say this from five-and-twenty years’ experience. I have strongly pointed this out to my daughter T——, whose married habits are only now fixing. I have, you may believe, many anxious thoughts upon that subject: I hope every day will unfold some of those amiable parts of character which so endeared

her to us. It is, perhaps, fortunate that I left her so soon, and before all the bustle of a first *début*; for it leaves me more leisure than any one about her, from time to time to clear, if I may so speak, the path of life before her—that path, of which no one can better know all the difficulties, and all the dazzling temptations. I bought my own experience somewhat dear; some pains and mortifications, at least, attended my youth and ignorance on first entering the world, which I hope to spare her.

I am surprised at *you* expressing such sentiments upon these letters. You say they were unworthy of a man of sense to write, even though blinded by passion: I think, on the contrary, they are exactly what a man would write under such circumstances, whose character had once been an elevated one. Be assured, while she is his plaything, he despises her; and, as he cannot address a feeling to her mind, he has nothing left but to keep alive the flutter of passion by a sentimental rhapsody, to which no woman, who had not so degraded herself, would, for a moment, submit. I remember hearing that the Duke of ———,

when one of his sisters asked him how he could so expose himself upon black and white, when a similar correspondence was brought out, he answered, “ My dear, I think I should have exposed myself much more, if I had written sense than nonsense.”

Pray let me hear what the world in Oxfordshire are doing; and if you ever hear from sister E——; on her Scotch tour. I was glad she went, as Frederick had not got his commission, and she may not have him with her another season. I have not found as many English here as I expected: curiosity is nearly satisfied, and travelling is a pleasure most people can only enjoy once. Adieu.

Ever your affectionate friend,

G. S.

LETTER XXIII.

(FIRST FROM DUNKELD.)

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Dunkeld, September, 18—

THE sin of castle-building besets me when loitering about one of those beautiful Highland places: I can figure it my own some sixty years ago, when Highland barons, and of course their baronesses, were more formidable in power than now: then, dear Jane, I should have made you sleep and wake, eat and drink, to the sound of my pipers pacing their measured steps before my castle: I would not have listened to your fine lady-airs of being stunned to death, as you told a certain Royal Duke at Lady C——'s assembly, where he brought a piper from a Highland dinner last winter. No, my dear, you durst not have offended me or my piper; lest some of my broad swords or dirks, at the

nod of my Highland bonnet, had taken that pretty head of yours off your shoulders. I don't mean to frighten you, but just to give you a hint how to behave in my presence: and more than that, I can tell you, all the roast beef of Old England, floated down by your home-brewed ale, would not do as much for you in real loyal feeling, among your sleek, comfortable tenantry; as I could draw forth from the recesses of this wild, beautiful country, if I, their liege lord, required their services. Still, even, as I understand the character of this people, this, under right management, might be effected. But as it is, I must return to the outside of their castles, since my lot did not place me within them, and follow the Tay to Dunkeld, where velvet terraces, as at the last place we saw, form one delightful feature on its banks. You know I do not care much for fine houses, or I should have mentioned Taymouth; it is not finished I understand, but is very handsome; and there is one fine, and many comfortable, rooms, paintings, and all that. I must correct the word fine, and beg you to consider I talk of dimensions, not silks and satins. It is called a Baron's

hall; and I thought if I had had a good partner, and no sprained ankle, I could have made a good ball-room of it. Here, there is an old house, and a new one intended. The wooded hills here, and situation of the bridge and village, are the most striking things. But receive my report with caution, as I could not ramble about as usual. Mamma gave me the carriage to go twenty miles farther, and Frederick accompanied me: we saw a lovely pass; such woods and mountains: Ben-y-Glow is the finest. I found a book of scenery in a little shop here, which gave me the names, and also told us where to find Lord Viscount Dundee's Cairn. He was killed near that pass. A cairn! pray what is that? Oh! I forgot you belong still to the dark ages; turn to sarcophagus or mausoleum, my dear, and that will do well enough for you till we meet.

Your ladyship may perceive, by my being so pert to-day, that your letters have reached me; and to punish you for finding fault with me for not being more intelligible, as you call it, at Edinburgh, I will be still more unintelligible at Dunkeld.

If you say I was bit at Edinbùrgh, what shall I hear now,—that I may as well bury myself in some Highland village, as I shall never be good company in the world again. The world, as you sometimes talk of it, may quarrel with me, but I have philosophy enough to keep my temper with it; and those who do so, always come off best in all disputes.

We go next to Perth, and then (now do not follow me on maps) to Creffe, *et puis* to Loch Catharine and Loch Lomond. How this zig-zag has come about, is an error other tourists have fallen into before; but a map would tell a sad tale, and there you would see we have to tread our way back. *N'importe*, it is all beautiful, and we have time at command. *Addio*.

•

L. M.

LETTER XXIV.

(SECOND FROM DUNKELD.)

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Dunkeld, September, 15—

STILL here, but we cannot be detained in a more agreeable place. One of the horses was found to be a little lame on my return from Blair two days ago, another place of the Duke of Athol's, which Frederick saw while we baited after that twenty-mile excursion I mentioned. It was there my brother had been so politely asked to shoot; but our tour would have been too much broken in upon by any more separations; and he called upon the Duke with his apology. I found the inn such a nice place; and though I had not time when I wrote last, this delay affords it now, to let you hear something very curious. After I ordered a little dinner, I had no resource for my own amuse-

ment, except a volume of Shakspeare : no bad one either. But there is a sort of fidget one feels, when at a place you are prevented from seeing, that, with me at least, makes me much oftener look out at the window than upon my book. It was a nicely sanded floor, and for a summer's day, no bad room to spend an hour or two in. Scotch kindness, however, relieved me from loneliness, as the mistress of the house came to see I was not "tiring;" and Sam had given her a hint of my sprain, so she brought a creepy along with her. A creepy, my dear Jane, I think may be called great, great grandmother to a comfort and ease. The good woman insisted upon removing the bandage from my ankle; and while giving a little of her advice, we fell into a chat, and I happened to ask who lived in a rather fanciful castle, upon a small scale, I had observed about a mile off. She said, "that's no been a lucky house, young lady;" and she mentioned much of family distress: after which followed, "for by Mr. Price's story,—but as ye come from England, ye'll likely ken about it." I smiled at the simplicity of supposing my coming from a part of England, five

hundred miles or more from her neighbourhood, should make that likely : but, from her look, I saw it was no laughing matter ; and, upon a few more hints, it came at once into my mind, that this had been the retreat of one, who by no means was a Mr. Price. All we had since heard, though I did not, of course, know much of what the world were about then, came across me ; and I own I was curious to see what impressions such a thing had made in the immediate neighbourhood. I can't give all her Scotch ; however, it appeared there was little known ; but she said, " My daughter, who was married a wee bit up the brae, found herself too late for church one day, and had taken a short cut through the grounds, and come un-awares upon the lady, seemingly in a state of extreme agitation ; she looked ' razed,' and the lassie was wae for her ; but since I kent a', it was nae wonder, for it mus' have been an awfu' state to be within clink o' the ringing-in bell, when she had stickit hersel out o' the kirk." I wish, my dear Jane, you were Scotch enough to understand the full force of this : I do not regret the curiosity that led to an observation

I shall treasure while I live, as it will be recalled to me with every church-bell I hear; and I cannot feel too grateful to our dear mother, who, when a knowledge of evil was unavoidable, taught my heart to apply it to a right use.

You may say this is very dull stuff, but I should not think very well of any young woman, dear Jane, of our age, (twenty is not far off, my friend,) after living three years in the world, who turned with indifference from such a heart-felt truth, as I am now Scotchwoman enough to feel this was.

Write now any day, or every day; we shall never be out of reach of posts again, I am told: and we go south by Glasgow, and pay a visit near there; so I expect to be nearly another month in this most agreeable part of His Majesty's dominions.

Yours,

• Lucy M.

LETTER XXV.

Lady S. to Lady T.

Naples, September.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

I MENTIONED to you what a pretty chateau my friend had near here. She made a party for the girls to see country life among this lively people; and we spent a week with her: their place is about twelve miles from here. One evening she had a ball, another day a sort of fair, and exhibited to us a variety of character and costume we had no idea of. The young women appear quite uncontrolled by the presence of their parents; and to our eyes, accustomed to the shy and awkward appearance of English peasants, it was a very novel sight: the gay elegance of their manners and dress, their songs, dancing, and merry pranks, combined to make it quite delightful. Your sisters have each got a dress, such as we thought prettiest, though quite differ-

ent; and some of the girls taught them to dance with the tambourine. One naturally is led to ask, can these people know any care, when seen under so gay an aspect; they shake it off wonderfully if they do; for young and old, all partook of the different fêtes with equal spirit. Your father speaks Italian so well that he had a great deal of conversation with them. The chateau is very old, but has been so well kept, it is in high preservation. Its gardens are laid out more in our style than any I have seen; and with the luxurious growth of the climate, must be beautiful at all seasons. The laurel, and myrtle, and orange, all seem to feel quite at home. There are also fine terraces, overlooking a vast extent of country; and each has a rich marble balustrade, where, in summer, I suppose you would breathe a thousand perfumes: still, the last blossoms of the year yield much fragrance. Parks are not at all understood here; but there are large enclosures near the house, and magnificent chesnuts and ilex grow in abundance. I saw a female school there also, the first I had ever heard of in Italy, and taught by an excellent old man, though of course not of

our persuasion. The girls have a native elegance with their needles, that gives much help to the female teacher : indeed, the difficulty here is to keep under proper control that degree of fanciful taste, which mixes with every thing. They are either artists, or so stupid, nothing can be made of them : my English house-maid will do more work in a couple of hours than half-a-dozen of the girls in the chateau.

I cannot enter upon the paintings ; they are all by the first masters, and beautifully arranged : the light falls so softly upon some of my favourite subjects, I spent hours in the gallery. Adieu, my dear daughter, with my best love and blessing.

Ever most affectionately yours.

LETTER XXVI.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

(JULIA'S INCLOSED.)

No date, except September.

So far from taking any offence at Julia's objections to my letters, dear Jane, I shall have much pleasure in addressing one to herself, which shall have a beginning and ending,—weather, poetry, and all the eke's out, she observes the want of in those to you: but if you think it too great a quiz, don't send it. One may venture into deep seas there, and return safe to land, I believe.

Seal it with any thing you have of fancy, and forward it.

Yours,
L. M.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I TAKE great blame to myself for not having fulfilled my promise, of giving you an account of our travels into the North; but the fatigue of such a journey as ours quite unhinges my poor nerves, and at this moment I have a cold which blinds me: I caught it last night, walking at Lord B——'s; and the terraces there are of a horrid spongy kind, everlastingly wet: I suppose, as they are close to the river, it is quite atrocious not to keep them in gravel. My pink silk boots came home in such a state! quite as if I had stepped into a puddle. Will you, love, order fresh ones to meet me in B—shire, as I dare not, face *Trichotte* with these in such a pickle: Lord, how she would rave. We have seen a great deal; but you can see nothing without the destruction of a favourite spencer, my sweet Julia: and as to all my lovely flounced dresses, I think every brier and thistle in Scotland caught a yard each.

Oh! only think, a hideous water-dog caught up my “Kiss me, if you dare;” and, strange as you may think it, carried it across a river, into a gentleman's boat: I got it, however,

safely back. Don't you recollect how Lord George joked about these bonnets, when they came out with that name last spring. We had to wait a week for Frederick, before we could sail for Staffa; he had idled away his time with another party, and I used to watch his vessel coming,

—— and sat “ upon a promontory,
Listening to such dulcet tones,
As made the rude sea grow civil,”

or some such thing: but I don't care for old stuff of Shakspeare. Byron is my favourite! I do so love him! Don't you? For instance:

“ Earth holds no other like to thee,
“ Or if it doth, in vain for me;
“ For worlds, I dare not view the fair
“ Resembling thee, and thou not there.”

This, dear Julia, was said of a lady dead; you know; but it would be so charming to have it said to one's self. It rains very hard, and Sam makes such a bother because the carriage has been an hour at the door. I must really beg Mr. Sam to know why Scotch horses

can't stand as still, and as long, as English do. And in London, did you ever, dear love, hurry yourself, because the carriage was announced? I never do; I don't know any one who does. Whose horses look more sleek than the young Marquis's in the Square? and I know, to my cost, how long they wait; for I never can move from the window till I see him mount: no one manages the whole set-out so well. Was it not particularly cross in Mamma to bring Sam: she might as well have had my brother's German; for he certainly had no use for him, or he would not have left him when he went abroad. Sam again, and Mamma too, in a fidget. Who can write their travels under such a prating. Pray don't forget the boots, if you love me; and accept this account of all I have seen in a few words,—that Scotland is not like dear Tunbridge, or Weymouth, or any thing you ever saw.

Adieu, my dear girl: love me ever, and forgive my present hurry.

Yours affectionately,

L. M.

LETTER XXVII.

Lady Lucy to Sir Henry.

Perth, September, 18—

MY DEAREST UNCLE,

SINCE you wish me to continue to write without disguise, and call me a good girl, I need not say you have my whole heart before you, and I do not fear being called too solemn. I believe, except Mamma, there is no creature but yourself I would write this letter to: however, I never forget your advice, and do my best to keep up her spirits. My little accident rather parted me from the rest of our group; and while they were yesterday following guides, and seeing a great many beautiful things, I was very differently employed. In sauntering about, I got acquainted, as I generally do, with the clergyman at ———, who was preparing to leave me rather in a hurry, saying he had been sent for, as an old woman of eighty-nine had

died the night before, and he was going a few yards further on, to see the family. And, my dear uncle, some circumstances have led me to observe that the young women in Scotland seemed entirely devoid of our weaknesses upon this awful subject. I believe the clergyman saw something struggling in my mind; for he paused, and said, "Young lady, if you have any wish to accompany me, it will be taken as a great compliment," and gave me his arm. We soon reached the house, a low cottage, and from the window being open, I glanced in, and saw a number of females, sitting in perfect silence: perhaps I trembled a little, for the kind-hearted man whispered, "Probably, if this is the first time you have witnessed such a scene, it may be affecting; but you will find many present younger than yourself, and you will soon recover your composure." We entered, and he merely said, "A young friend of mine wished to pay this respect to the dead." A quiet sort of bow from an elderly female, near the bed, made us welcome; and the clergyman, waving aside the offer of refreshments, which were heaped upon a table, said, "Let us pray," in a

tone I felt calmed my agitation entirely. It was a sort of mixture of prayer and admonition : the good qualities of the deceased were pointed out as an example to each, according to their time of life ; and “ the stranger within our gates ” had her share of encouragement to persevere in such Christian duties as might, at any time, fall in her way. Fortified by this, I was led to contemplate the remains of the head of a family with a degree of serene feeling I could not have hoped for : and I now regret that so large a portion of my life has passed, my dear uncle, under the common error of flying from the house of woe. There were only females present, and of every age, even to childhood. Interchange of civilities and refreshments now passed, in the quiet under-tone of suppressed feeling, that suited well with the scene and the means possessed by those who wished to mark they thought a stranger had done them a kindness. The clergyman promised the family he would return, and attended me, at my request, to the inn. I was particularly struck by the good sense and kind feeling which led him to wish to strengthen my mind against such weak-

ness as I had shown upon entering that cottage ; at the same time, having screened me from the observation of others, by the prayers preceding all the common conversation on such occasions, which, on my account, he shunned, in this first visit after a death. I think, dear uncle, you will approve of what I have written ; as I feel a conviction in my own mind of having done right. I took down the clergyman's address, and, in the evening, sent a note, requesting him to present a small token of remembrance to the family we had visited. I keep his answer for you.

Adieu, dear Sir Henry. We came here this evening.

Your ever affectionate niece,

L. M.

LETTER XXVIII.

Lady S. to the Countess of E.

Naples, September, 18—

I GOT your first from Scotland, my dear sister, in shorter time than I could have expected; but a courier coming over, had been directed to call in Grosvenor-square, and we got whole packets. I always understood that part of Scotland was gloomy and rainy; but you talk of eternal sunshine!—The Echo chapel was a good trick: I could have helped Edward's flute-scene without much difficulty I think, as an Italian moon, broken arches and pillars, such as I fancy no Highland chapel ever saw, with a monk or two gliding in the usual form of romance, would have been more interesting: but I see you are dabblers in scene-painting, or you would have fancied all this. I must have seen some of those people you mention having met in Edinburgh in London; but the occa-

sional trip, on the small scale which a Scotch family makes there in general, leaves no trace on the full tide of London society—they are seen, gone, and forgotten: and I am sorry to admit, it is a common rule of those who think themselves somebody, to treat all who do not come up with them, as nobody. And pray, my dear, which of your fashionable friends will you find bold enough to introduce “Nobody” at an assembly in London. Tell me honestly, E., if this is not true. I confess I listen with astonishment to the accounts I hear all English people, who come from a summer’s tour through Scotland, give of the hospitality of that country. And what return do they find when they come South? I believe the buzz one hears at a London “at-home” may sufficiently answer that question. “Who is she?” “I can’t tell; but I believe she is Scotch.”—“Well, ’pon my honour, she is handsome,” some man may say. “Handsome!” half-a-dozen girls exclaim; “Lord, where are your eyes; but do try and find out her name.” “How can you bother so; I tell you she is Scotch, and nobody knows her.” After some perseverance, it is at last discovered she is Scotch,

and known to some of the party, and belongs to the family of the Hospitables in Scotland, and so "one must do something" to be civil. This something ends in the "nothing" of a card to a party where five or six hundred faces are turned from the stranger in careless fashionable indifference: and it may happen, unless her *chaperon* be well known, a little more of the impertinent "Who is she?" may be added to her evening's reception; for the Who is she? is not always said in ignorance. I believe, if I could ask some of that nation, they would own this was no caricature. Long, my dear sister, as I have been grafted upon the English stock, I cannot but feel and blush for my circle, when I see this.

We are much pleased with Naples; and you who love flowers, would be regaled almost to excess. Our marble terrace is covered with orange-trees, in all their bloom and fruit. The heat is bearable, except during the middle of the day; and we go much on the water. My Lord finds a few old friends, and I have several new acquaintances; and foreigners are easy of access, you know. The other day Mrs. ——— came here, with, I believe, the very riding-habit.

she has worn in the Park for half-a-dozen years. She tossed down her hat with the usual salutation, "What's doing here? is there any riding ground near here?" I asked for her horse before her husband, but I did not enquire for her children at all, or I might have been apt to say, I saw no good reason for her being so far from them; but she soon added, "Oh! the little cockneys; I left them with their grandmother, and she promised to find country air for them, if the doctor thought it requisite." — "Well, girls, all over accomplished, I suppose, since you came to Italy: let me hear which of you can squall best; but spare me your harp and port-folios, for I am quite unworthy of such a display of talent, as no doubt I should find." However, she knows that is not my way; and added, "I did not, I must say, expect you to cast away the good sense God has given you, when you changed your climate: but do let the girls learn to ride, they will be fit for nothing unless you do." Adieu.

Yours affectionately,
G. S.

LETTER XXIX.

Lady Lucy H. to Lady Jane.

Loch Earn Head, September.

It was very lazy in me not to write from Perth, where we spent two days; but I bought a Guide, which will oblige you to brush up your memory upon Scottish history a little, with which this town and neighbourhood is intimately connected. You could not be at Caen Wood without hearing of Scone, I am sure. Lord G—— and Lord K—— have also beautiful places near Perth, and the town stands “begirt” with tasteful villas. The bridge over the Tay, who, when an infant just born, attracted so much of our admiration, expands into, I believe, nine or ten arches; and standing upon it, I took my last and lingering look of those mountains, which had been my companions for the last ten days: and now we parted, they having faded into distance, and only their outline visible. Perth is

most beautifully situated, and I should suppose a very desirable place to live at; having also an *every-day* view of some of the grandest objects in nature. Were I to write out a newspaper advertisement for a London eye of one of these villas, what could I not say? We slept last night at a nice little village, called Creffe, having seen a lovely place of Lord L.'s, with the very tomb of Bessy Bell and Mary Gray, in the morning; and at this village what do you think I bought? French ribbands for my bonnet! I asked for Tartan.

“Ma'am, our ladies never wear plaid ribbands; there is no demand for them.”

I could not resist saying, they were far behind in fashion then; for my brother had sent me home some from Paris, but they were in London. Such affectation, with huge mountains hanging over the very town in which they affect to despise Tartan! It seemed an excellent shop, however, and better French ribbands, or imitations, I never saw.

After we left it this morning, about a mile I suppose, we spied an iron gate, which is always a signal with us to stop. It was a heavenly day,

and Frederick and I got out, and we went to the Lodge, and a very nice looking woman came out, and, convent like, spoke to us through her grate. "Pray, good woman, can we see this place?" Frederick said, and held some silver in his hand. She had a face like crimson, and said, "No for siller, sir;" and, I suppose, seeing we looked disappointed, she added, with one arm resting on the gate, "I dare say the ladies may come in, if you don't go near the house; my lady keeps out nain but 'unco-folk:" and after giving the servants directions how to avoid the house, we were admitted. This term of exclusion was quite Greek to us; but truly happy I was to find it did not apply to me, as when we had gained the height in the approach, which we were cautioned not to pass beyond, such a scene lay before my eyes, as I do not believe could be surpassed. All we had ever seen of Highland scenery appeared here combined in one most delightful prospect, and softened into a lovely display of its finest features, as the eye rested on every beautiful, and no one rude object. .

A lake lay below in the vale, under a fine

hanging wood, where the house was placed ; and this lake seemed to be surrounded with most beautiful and almost English park scenery—large trees, groups of deer, and every thing that nature throws together of her most embellishing ingredients. The distance was bounded by very pointed mountains ; and a fine river seemed to ornament the valley to their feet : in short, I do not suppose such a complete and perfectly enchanting residence could be found any where ; at least, after all we have seen, we were really dumb with delight. We skirted the lake, to avoid giving any umbrage ; and Frederick and I found a path through the wood, where some country people were at work : Mamma took the carriage-road on a different side of the lake. I put some of my usual questions, and found, to my great joy, that the happy mistress of this scene never quits it : one old man, with his bonnet off, seemed much pleased with my admiration, and asked if I knew the family. I said no, but I hoped they enjoyed their beautiful home ; and then I found it to be possessed by a large family, who “round the year” in the enjoyment of the scene before me. It would say

little for their taste, if they were insensible to its beauties; yet on this subject an English woman must be silent, when so many of our own beautiful residences never see their owners. We passed another very handsome place, then an obelisk to the memory of the late Lord Melville, placed with great taste upon the top of a wooded hill, whose shape appeared to taper to the exact space left for the building: his lordship's place lay near, but we only saw it from a distance. Another large lake, with an excellent road at the water-edge, brought us here; and such a clean, comfortable little place never was.

We exchanged our four horses at Perth for fresh ones, glad to release those faithful companions from their duty.

We reach Callender to breakfast to-morrow; and then for the Lady of the Lake her very self as guide to Loch Catharine. I fear in such often described scenery my pen must fail. Adieu.

Ever affectionately yours,

L. M.

LETTER XXX.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Callender, Friday. No date.

LOCH Catharine exceeds by so much all I had heard, or can describe, my dear Jane, that I can only wish you may take a journey into Scotland, at some future period, and see this most beautiful lake yourself. There are several other lakes very beautiful also, but we were rather too late in reaching this part of Scotland: and, I fear, Loch Lomond, with all its wonders even, must be seen to disadvantage: however, where we were, though we did loiter, there was so much to enjoy, I have no regrets. The Guide affected a great deal too much of the Lady of the Lake talk, which annoyed us a little; but, I imagine, he finds it popular to do so. They say at the inn, that every lady's maid runs about reading it; though, unless now and then a party of them club for a cart,

they have little chance of seeing it, as it is ten miles of very bad road, and such as few of your Betsy tribe would like to be jolted over. I suppose it is not left for me to suggest, what a comfort a nice inn, such as I wrote last from, would be at the Lake: every tourist must have already grumbled upon that subject.

Mamma found letters here forwarded from Stirling, by the kind attention of a gentleman in Edinburgh, who appointed our letter stations, from time to time, as Mamma wished: for this part of the business of travelling, I see, ought never to be done from where you first set off,—from Edinburgh I mean; but arranged as you go on, a week, and no more, in advance. Among Mamma's, she had one from Mrs. H. from Oxfordshire, which contains this important passage: "We must have Lucy soon with us, to assist at a wedding; where, I am desired to say, her taste is much wished for, to preside over all the weighty affairs of the tonsure. Here, I suppose, I should leave my news; and so Lady Lucy would serve me; but I am less cruel; and, in plain English, Lady Mary — has accepted Lord F——. She hesitated at

first, but all is now going well; and the two families remove to town, I believe, in six weeks at farthest. Do, my dear Lady E., bring up Lucy as soon as possible, as she is to be first bride's-maid."

What do you think of this, dear Jane?—" She hesitated at first:" I hope that will not verify the old song I heard so sweetly sung lately:—

“ They gaed to him my hand,
“ But my heart was at the sea.”

No, it cannot be; Mary is too good a girl for that, and our conjectures must have been without foundation. Lord F—— must be a good deal her senior: but we are going, you know, where the peerage is understood by heart; and I shall learn all about it. I am not in the least acquainted with Lord F——: are you?

I shall spare my congratulations till I hear more.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER XXXI.

Lady S. to the Countess of E.

Naples, September, 18—

MY DEAR SISTER,

WHEN you open a book of travels, and turn up a “Visit to Mount Vesuvius,” probably you would glance on to something less known. But, nevertheless, every Englishman or woman, I suppose, feel as we do—a great deal wiser for having been there. I shall not go over the whole fatigues and chances that befel us; but, with my lord, the girls, Lord E——, and my son, we made it out remarkably well: and as it is, with most of us, the only time we shall ever attempt it, you must forgive so old a theme. The total change of feeling it creates to look into this recess of the most awful element, which, though quiet at the time, we see has raged with such violence, calls forth many ideas, which common events

cannot do: and yet, so great and sublime mine had been, that it did not come up to them. Etna, I suppose, is much beyond Vesuvius, as I hear that mountain talked of with far more enthusiasm than this: but still it is very grand. The view alone is superb. The bay of Naples, I suppose, cannot be rivalled: and we had every advantage of light and shade possible. A bird's-eye view, which one has from such a height, in general is not very interesting; (you know that I have climbed every mountain within my reach all my life;) but here, so much of expanse is sea, and objects not affected by being seen from a height, that it no way lessened the magnificence to me. I think I know a scene somewhat resembling it elsewhere; but I will not name it, as the outcry would be great with those who treat all home-views as paltry, compared to Italy:—just as they say, the *Soliel de Midi* is so different from an English sun: hotter, I grant; but to me not so agreeable. Of course I compare the agreeable days of each climate. But, my dear sister, I did not require to come so far to find out I liked England better than I should do

any other place. However, I am called a very good foreigner: I find no faults, and enjoy whatever we meet with just as we find it; which, I suppose, is not always the case with English people. I regret to say ——'s health does not improve, and his wife droops over the melancholy journey before her: it is a pity he does not go home by sea. Such interest at the Admiralty would easily provide a ship, or some one on the Mediterranean station already, might get leave for a short time. H. D. is off this coast now. The eldest daughter is very plain, and the youngest not handsome. All the vivacity we once knew is extinguished in that family; and truly sorry do I feel for them. To go to Italy as a last resource, I think is the worst possible. A dying person requires ease; and many circumstances which must be missed, and for which little compensation can be found in climate, and the busy buzz of healthy travellers at every place they go to, makes the contrast an aggravating evil. If ever I fall sick, let me have my own house over me. We have agreed to let George go with Lord E—— to Malta; and they are in full preparation.

E—— says he will not go to London till after March. What a handsome creature he is! and he has Lady Lucy's full black eye, but not the spirit of hers. I don't know if she will please in Scotland, she lets her spirits run away with her too much, at times: however, that fault will mend. I have almost destroyed my eyes (never strong) inspecting a Mosaic work here; it is most curious. My lord says, on looking over my shoulder, that I talk of your children too freely. I cannot see that: I love them as my own. God bless them and you.

Ever, my dear sister,

Your affectionate

G. S.

LETTER XXXII.

Mrs. H. to the Countess of E.

Hastings, Oct.

MY last mentioned the intended marriage at — Park. Lady Mary is fortunate in finding character and all the advantages of life combined in Lord F.; and her father is a very happy man. I shall meet you as you wish, after carrying home my young ones. The autumn air blows keen now, and I think Richmond will suit us all better than the coast. I hear Lady Georgina is taking a little peep at the library of an evening, from which I infer her black crape is not drawn so closely over her face: it will all end as I told you. I think the Scotch summer has been fully better than ours, at least during the autumn we had more wetting days than you had. But it is time to quit that country of mist; I know it only from description, and probably not a very favourable one

either. Sir Thomas, you know, cannot endure it. His pleasures are to be found as well at the Mansion House as at the west end of the town, I believe; and under such circumstances, I imagine he has no taste for the sublime and beautiful.

My snuff-box was at last sent to me with a polite note, from a stranger who had lost my address, though the box was safely brought ashore in his servant's hat. I blamed the Custom-house unjustly.

Lady Lucy will be as brown as a berry: you really ought to insist upon a larger bonnet.

Yours ever,

My dear Lady E.,

Most sincerely,

H.

LETTER XXXIII.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Loch Lomond, Oct

SLIING Loch Lomond, I imagine, in July and October are quite different things. Though there are days still left when it appears beautiful, yet I think the autumn change upon the style of wood which is most common here is not favourable. These woods change *en masse*, not in distinct tints, so favourable for painting: the lake, too, is seldom calm. And in short, with fog and some other cloudy circumstances, Loch Lomond has not delighted me so much as it ought to do; and if 'ever I am in' Scotland again, I hope to see it as I did Loch Awe, lighted up by a summer's sun. Loch Awe, of a morning, with the castle in ruins, reflected from the bosom of the lake, unruffled as we saw it, is, in my mind, the most perfect picture of inland scenery that can be found; I should more modestly say, that I have found. I have been at a Scotch Ball, and a very pretty sight it was;—

happy looking girls in full animation, not hampered by the forms and restraints of a Lady J—— presiding, but each selected by a favourite (I suppose), set off, I may say, to dance out the evening, changing partners of course: but no languid pauses, or dawdling foreign music. And the blooming health and firm footing was as conducive to enjoyment here, I saw, as in the summer walking which I had admired so much when we spent a little time in Edinburgh. My dear Jane, if to enjoy life be the purpose of coming together in society, I am apt to think they understand it best, who sacrifice least to the tyranny of Fashion; and, by the example I had a few evenings ago, I should think no bread-and-butter ball with us can afford the same pleasure the good supper, and cheerful dance before and after it, does which I saw; And I was told such had been exactly the style of balls for a century. This may be a “shocking vulgar taste,” but I would rather dance and sup with them than on our side of the Tweed for all that. I shall write some account of the morning after it to Julia, which will touch upon some of her foibles; but if, as

I hope, she may be cured, it is the best way to bring her round. Adieu.

Yours ever,

L. M.

LETTER XXXIII. * .

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Near Dumbarton Oct.

I FIND that a strong imputation of want of taste, my dear Jane, is attached to my having said so little of Loch Lomond: I treat that lake as I do some of the beauties of the present day, whose claims to admiration could receive no additional weight from my describing the fair-one dissolved in tears,* unless I could add the lovely feature of a sunny smile to dispel them. I advise you, when you visit Scotland, never to hint a wish that you should see the mountains clad in the misty veil, which is so becoming to them in poetry and painting -- in nature too, if you could see it once only (should your stay be short): but I must not tell tales out of school. I find the vulgar attributes of a clear sky more to my taste.

Loch Lomond has length and breadth : woods, mountains, and islands, all in the regular way,—no, not in the regular way; one island is, quite out of all rule, laid down for either the picturesque, or the sublime and beautiful, by any who ever handled the subject : and had not that wicked recollection of telling tales withheld me, I could have added such a peep into “ the secrets of the prison-house,” as never before met your eye when it glanced over a polite traveller’s letter. Like most of my sex, who feel conscience struggling to keep a secret out of the power of that love of gossip which makes it so delightful to have one to tell, I must find some delicate hint or other to gratify both parties ; so, Conscience, keep quiet a very little, till I see what may be done for you. Well, then, it is no traveller’s lie, but a *sobri* truth, that there is an island peopled with men and women, placed there by their friends as a cure for one little foible, and it is called “ The Bettering Island.” Now, dear Jane, if this is not delicately told, I know not how to do it.

This season has been remarkably fine ; but even the finest closes in Broken Weather ; and we came to the softer beauties of Loch Lomond

and the Clyde too late, but never too late to partake of the hospitalities shown on their shores. I think the favourite Scottish poet has a graceful way of leading that virtue to the fireside in the train of Summer and Autumn:—

Where “Hospitality, with cloudless brow,”

comes hand-in-hand with Winter.

I should, from my own experience, give Summer and Autumn the same leader in Scotland, I assure you.

Are the ladies as handsome as Frederick tells my brother? is another subject on which you say I have been too sparing. Frederick did admire one young woman he met with; and she is so fair a specimen of Scotch beauty, that I may sketch her in answer to your remark. ‘At nineteen, I think Lawrence could not have a finer subject; a full blue eye, whose glances would be dazzling, but for a look of modest softness that was very attractive. All the other features were lovely also; and a smile of real youthful happiness, and light step, carried so much appearance of enjoyment with them, that she was very bewitching.’ I must not omit her hair,

which was really clustering in Nature's most sunny ringlets. You will not now wonder that the "merry glance of mountain-maid" pleased Frederick so much.

We met lately with a very interesting character in Mrs. F——, who lost her only son at Waterloo, and is herself a widow. My sympathy flows more freely towards such sorrow than it does to younger mourners; for, beneath the gracefully folded draperies, I can fancy I sometimes see hearts more alive to the flattery of the living than entombed with the blighted happiness that is laid in the grave; hence so many bridal widows; those I sympathise with, must earn it by constancy in their grief. Very fine, I dare say, you think, and very improbable; and, perhaps, you may also think I grudge the rival claims of a lovely widow to that admiration which we damsels would like to keep all to ourselves; that must be at the bottom of it, certainly. I remember being present, last year, when a fine painting was exhibited of a Grecian widow raving over the tomb, or funeral procession, of her husband; and her beauty was much more praised than her attendant damsels, each of whom might have been Venus; and one

had a sly look, as if she thought as I do of young widows. I pointed her out to notice, but only found one gentleman who preferred her to the chief actress in the scene; and as to the rest, they were called milk-and-water girls, though they were very well-behaved, handsome females.

I believe there must be something of exaggeration in love or grief, to work up men to the pitch called admiration; and of how many does this make actresses, whom I know to be very different characters off the stage. It seems to me unnatural to see a woman bounding like an impatient horse, either under grief or joy; and yet I don't think myself very tame. However, if, my dear Jane, I ever love any one, I shall do so in so quiet a way as shall surprise you; for I always doubt very romantic accounts of that formidable passion not being founded on a safe rock, against which the stormy scenes of life may toss their foam in vain. To such a one only shall I be chained. Happily my paper is come to an end.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER XXXIV.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady J.

B——, near Dumbarton, Oct.

It is true enough, my dear Jane, I said nothing of Blair; and for the best reason, that I had nothing to say, as the road up to the inn is behind a wall; and from the window I saw nothing that looked very tempting. Yet I can easily understand why you should have heard of this place more than of Dunkeld, which is so much more beautiful, as the full tide of Miss Chace's hospitality flows from Blair for some months every season, and there must be many to report that in society. I hear that in no house in Scotland do friends and tourists meet in larger parties, or find a more hearty welcome. I almost smelt the hot rolls and butter going up into the forest with a breakfast-party the morning I was there. The good lady of my inn dwelt

with such delight upon the subject, and told me much more than I could venture to repeat of the hundreds of wild deer driven down to let the ladies partake of the sport. I think your remarks very natural upon the number of houses where we found families established *en famille*; they are much greater certainly than with us; and I noticed that where we were shown through an empty one, we never met with the common simpering kind of housekeeper, who is sure to say, "La, Ma'am, the family bees abroad, or at Weymouth," &c. &c. or "No, ladies, the family never comes down till Christmas, and then we have such a power of company, and such a racket, I am obliged to take the summer parlour even to hold the still-room company."

Here, my common questions about the proprietors, which I never omit, as I like to trace something of the inhabitants wherever I go, are generally answered, when it is in the absentee way, with a sort of explanation why it is so, or a hesitation, which marks that they are not so from choice, but from circumstances of too delicate a nature to be mentioned in the presence

of strangers. I do indeed always find the connection between the master and dependant of a character quite different from ours. I do not confine this to old servants, but to old and young, scattered at all corners of property, never seemingly too remote to unite the interest of the poorer class with the higher; and it puzzles me the more, as the least extent and widely parted estates, which often belong to a single individual, never can be all known to him; the face of them may, but not the character and personal interests of his tenantry. I did inquire frequently why it was so, but I found it useless; and more surprise was shown at my questions, than satisfaction given in answer to them.

This neighbourhood is crowded with good company, and we have been fortunate enough to meet with a second Sir H. Davy, I think, in Dr. —.

- His experiments are really amusing, and his present rage is by some process, which I have yet to learn, procuring thicker cream than any one else; and you may see a doctor, a lady, and a dairy maid, all creaming a milk dish, with an outer circle of amateurs. I should not have

got even a peep, but for an old friend of mine I spied in the corner, one of the Creepie family, and, with its help, I overlooked their heads.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER XXXV.

Lady S. to Lady T.

Naples, October, 18—

I MENTIONED, my dear daughter, that I got the particulars of a most romantic and interesting history lately, and I only now have found leisure to write them down for you. When in public with the Marchioness of S——, I had seen her frequently address a very pleasing, fine young woman, whose name and rank I knew, but nothing more; and she said she wished I should be better acquainted with her before she told me her history. She was reserved, but had a mild sort of quiet melancholy in her manner, that attracted me very much; and you shall now learn the cause. I am not at liberty to give her full name, so you must be satisfied with her being called Rosalie, after her Saint. She was the daughter of one of the first houses in this country, and brought into the world with

every advantage, having been educated at home, and under a very amiable mother, who, unfortunately, died when she was only fifteen. Her father had selected a youth for her partner in life every way worthy of her; and, what seldom happens, the young people were allowed to form an attachment before marriage, by a considerable degree of intimacy. The young Count's mother was a high, violent character, but had not openly opposed this; however, she conducted herself in a manner that showed little partiality to her future daughter. All, however, went on till a few days before the marriage; great and splendid were the preparations, and future happiness appeared within their reach. The young people, as usual, were separated for the last two days: one hardly dare glance at the feelings with which they parted, to meet again in the happiest union; love and hope blinding them to all future chances against the completion of their happiness. The evening before the marriage day, Count P.'s mother came to his house, newly prepared for his bride, and said, it had been resolved the marriage should take place on that

night, privately, to spare his lovely Rosalie's feelings, as she shrunk from the public solemnity, and that all should be ready, and at an hour she named, he would be called for by the father. Accordingly, every thing was so arranged, and the young man was conducted to church, his carriage following his supposed father-in-law. At the altar, which was dimly lighted, stood his mother and the bride, covered by a very thin silver tissue veil; and the ceremony proceeded. The youth, whose thoughts were fixed on his present happiness, and engrossed by the service, distinguished no one, and received his wife in full confidence. Silent she was, but tranquil; and his mother carried her home: all the *cortège* parted; and he followed to his own house, there to unveil the treasure of his heart. He found the saloon illuminated, and his brother and sister, who on some pretence had been kept absent from the ceremony, seemingly waiting in impatience with his mother beside the bride. The doors closed after him, and his mother withdrew the veil, and discovered to him that his wife was a *beautiful idiot*, whose large estates she had long coveted, and had taken this most

wicked manner of obtaining for her family. The anguish that followed brought him to the gates of death, and the loss of reason had nearly been the price at which she gained the success of a plan, truly diabolical. His sister, a most amiable creature, soothed him, at last, into submission to his hard fate, after finding no means were left to set him free. Of the mother and idiot I say nothing; he never saw either, I believe, from that hour: public hatred followed both, you may suppose, though one only could be called guilty. Rosalie's fate, I believe, has drawn more tears than any event in real life ever did in Naples. Public proof was brought her father, next morning, of the marriage, but, it was added, the bride being veiled, her name was not known. Enraged, as you may conceive, he carried his daughter (in silence) to his villa, and there, I understand, with more of tenderness than might have been expected from his stern character, unfolded what he deemed the treachery of her lover. The death-blow to all her happiness was such, as her most interesting countenance grows sallow, years cannot efface, and, for a couple of years, she seemed held by a

very slender thread. That a young woman should remain unmarried out of a convent, is a thing unknown; and her vast possessions made her father anxiously desire to see her married, before the fatal truth was made known to her, as the sacredness of sorrow had kept aloof all intruders, and her father resolved she should return to the world under the protection of a husband. How this was brought about, may be accounted for by those who know the state of society here. All she desired, when she found her father's will must be obeyed, was a full explanation of her situation to the Marquis de M., whom she married.

Thus, my dear, was this tragedy brought to the most trying scene—the discovery of her lover's innocence, after the harvest was sown. The Marquis undertook this; he is a cold character, but to her appeared sincerely attached. I have worked my way ever far, my dear daughter, to show you human nature under a new light. Fanny was not only nineteen when this hardest part of her trial was applied to her: but the effects were quite different from what might have been looked for;

the cup of misery appeared to have overflowed, and she received the intelligence as a relief from the bitterness of her former pangs; and, grateful for his faith, she owned it was wisely done to place new duties before her, ere she was acquainted with his share in their mutual misery: this proved a greatness of mind, which she has never deviated from since.

Once, and only once, they met in private society, and she requested only her father and husband might be witnesses. With such a woman, what must have been the effect upon all present. She clasped him to her heart, and wept in his arms; then turned to her husband, and said to Count P., "To this generous man we owe this indulgence; kneel with me, and swear it is the last intercourse we shall ever have together."

You may believe this noble woman's example won him to follow her upright views; and, I am told, at no moment of their lives, during those years, has that vow ever been broken: in public they meet, but the life of each is exemplary. She fills the station of a wife and mother to perfection, and is rewarded by the respect of

her husband, and all her society. There is an elevated character in her sorrows and self-command, that attracts my veneration: and, as to him, I do think one of her most severe and secret pangs must be to read in his faded form, and fine dejected countenance, what he has suffered. To me, all the penance that superstition could invent, or romance ever dictated, falls short of this existence: but in all sorrows being *shared*, and virtuous, there must be support; and this, truly, she merits and obtains. In England, much feeling would be given to the husband; but, I suppose, there is not in Naples a man who has better reason to think well of his wife, and he chose the lot for himself, when he could not foresee it was to end so well.

The idiot and mother both live, no one knows where. Count P. married his sister to a Venetian, and devotes his time to her and her family. Adieu. my blessing ever attend you.

Yours truly.

LETTER XXXVI.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Glasgow, October 22.

Now, Jane, you shall feel the full force of my indignation, in answer to my Dunkeld letters. You sit down to tell me that you and Lady this, and Miss t'other, seriously remonstrate against my gossiping scandal with the landlady of an inn; and conclude with the usual "bad taste" of such a proceeding. I am very glad you and your *coterie* did sit in judgment upon me, as it allows me an opportunity, which I never miss when there is lawful occasion, of giving my friends my opinion, and you have drawn it upon yourselves. I pardon the ignorance which gave that character to my conversation, because you, from experience at least, cannot know how little applicable it was; and, as to bad taste and gossip, I will give you an instance of it, drawn from facts frequently

under your own observation: I mean gossiping with your maids. I address you all bodily, ladies. After your long hair comes under Mrs. Abigail's brush, and she has you snug, she begins with the last piece of fashionable talk in the still-room. You, perhaps, give a faint "Why do you tell me such stuff," and take a book: however, the tongue and the brush go on; and, "La, my lady, I am sure I didn't invent it: and, had Mr. Poppet not told me he was at the back of her grace's chair at the time, I wouldn't have believed it myself." "Well, well, finish my hair, I tell you: till I get it from better authority, Betsy, I won't believe it."—"Lies and authority! I don't know how I deserve that. I'm sure Poppet loitered about the side-board, on purpose to hear the story out, as Lord T. H. hadn't got half through when the ices were removed, and thought we should all so like to get it quite fresh." It now becomes a little serious, and taking the brush into your own hand, you look grave; and may add, "Betsy, I said nothing of lies of your invention; and, if you bring me such a proof of Mr. Poppet being a listener,

I shall tell my father." You were right, indeed, to have the brush in your own hands, my dear Jane, upon this bold attack; or I should not have answered for the consequences, when the favourite retailer of table-talk was threatened with such an exposure. Now, my dear, there is my notion of bad taste and gossip; and if you never heard the counterpart of this pass at a London toilette, you have been in greater luck than your affectionate

LUCY M.

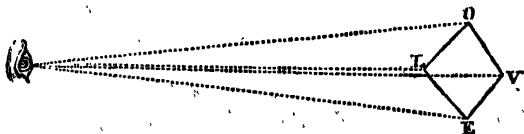
LETTER XXXVII.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Glasgow, October, 18—

MY dear Jane, to-morrow we bid adieu to Scotland. I go to town with Mamma, and Mrs. H. takes my sister off our hands at L——, and will carry her home, a very happy girl, with all her note and sketch books. I hope this tour has afforded you some amusement. But coming to Scotland is not merely seeing what is new to you, my dear Jane: I have reason to say, it is feeling what frank kindness can do, in so short a time, to make you forget that the country and its inhabitants were so lately strangers to you. I really must not trust myself to say more upon the subject, or my regrets at going south. I have been much amused with Dr. ——. A few mornings ago, he was giving us rather a tedious dissertation upon rarified air, dense vapours, and magnifying optics as

applicable to a mountainous country ; and turning to me, observed, “ Lady Lucy is so lately come from the very country of Ossian, she must have seen these effects frequently.” Jane, the temptation was too powerful to be resisted, and seizing a pencil, I said, “ Oh, I will explain that in a moment; be pleased, ladies, to attend. While I take a given point at L, carry the eye on to O,



continue to E, and when you return to L, you will have the clearest idea of the effects of magnifying optics which any philosopher can give you.” I believe politeness generally requires that one should add, “ present company excepted.” I did not venture to look the astonished Doctor in the face, but took refuge at the piano-forte, and rung such a peal of Mozart’s in his ears, as, I suppose, sent him to his study, to ruminate upon the degenerate state of the *Bas bleue* of these latter times.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, Cavendish-square, Nov., 18—

I WRITE now, my dear Jane, from my old corner, looking into the Square; and here I shall probably write for some time, as we found Sir Henry had brought the old lady here for medical advice, and we have changed patients. He carries Mamma to Sussex for a little sea air, as the season is still so mild; and, while I am waiting this marriage, I shall do my best for my old friend, who is not very sick after all, and has a few gossips in town, who play whist with her of an evening. One glance back to my dear Scotland, and then I shall plunge at once into all the busy bustle I am come about. We travelled at the rate of ninety miles a day, and from Glasgow, reached this on Thursday evening. I did not care how fast, since I was to leave Scotland and its many

beauties, and, for all your wicked imaginations, my love, for it is quite Platonic; and my heart, upon enquiry, I find just where it was the day I left Harley-street. Sir Henry was at the carriage steps in a moment, and, I believe, had me in his arms before the hall door closed. He is a very dear uncle to me.

This letter has been unfinished for several days; during that time, I have seen Mary and her future lord only twice, as I had some business of Mamma's to do, and to send things into the country for Maria, who is quietly settled at her studies again at B——'s hall. Mary says she is quite happy, and her lover appears perfectly so: she looked brilliant at dinner yesterday, and was in excellent spirits. Her father gives a handsome fortune, and wedding clothes at pleasure: she has only to command his purse, you know, at all times. Lord F. appears not above thirty, and as she is twenty-one, that is not amiss. She played the harp, and sung, and all, as far as I could observe, as yet appears to promise well: but, one evening, and one dinner-party, where she

was obliged to exert herself so much, and did to the utmost, is not quite sufficient for me to form a judgment upon the real prospects of this sweet girl; in whom I feel, perhaps, the greater interest, from having no kind mother, such as I possess, to direct her through the early part of her life. .Adieu: you shall soon hear more.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER XXXIX.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, Thursday.

I GOT a note from Mary, begging me to come and help to rid her of some of Bennet's impertinence, and rescue her out of the hands of half the trades-people of London: so I went to her directly after breakfast upon Tuesday, (that, my dear, is three days ago,) and found her in her dressing-room, not looking well; but I know when annoyed she always gets pale, so I gave all my attention to Mrs. Bennet's fuss, and you know she is a very important person, and a display was made of half the finery of London, I suppose. Mary's dressing-room, you know, is off the small drawing-room, and both rooms were almost covered, besides two cases on her writing-table of magnificent jewels, presented by her father and Lord F.; and I was just answering a question of Bennet's about the arrange-

ment of the wedding veil, when a sob from the couch behind me drew my attention to Mary, whom I found sunk, almost fainting, upon the end of the sofa. Bennet gave an exclamation that alarmed me considerably, as it was not such as a lady's maid generally makes when bustling about with drops and salt-bottles, but implied, Oh! it is come to this, is it? so I instantly dismissed her and locked her out. The wretched girl laid her head on my shoulder, and truly appeared heart-broken. When I urged her to place full and open confidence in me, she drew from her bosom a key, suspended from a chain, which she had worn for above a year, I had observed, with whatever dress she had on, and pointing to a *commode*, desired me to open it. I did so, and found various packets of letters, and a red case, on opening which the whole was explained, — the fine manly countenance of H. D. told me the whole; and I found she was sacrificing her own, and the happiness of one of the most amiable men I know, to ambition. To H. D. she has been under marriage engagements for a year.

What a lamentable picture this presents of female weakness. You know before he sailed last I said I suspected something of the kind. He is now on a foreign station for three years, and poor and absent, it appears, was not sufficient to weigh against Lord F.'s splendid proposals. Oh! Mary, what a disgrace to our sex.

I urged her to declare her situation at once to her father, and not deceive so basely, as I must call it, another amiable man, who, in all the trusting confidence of real attachment, is daily lavishing fondness upon her. Too late, she said; she could not, and her mind was quite made up; but to me she had determined to consign all these packets, and that picture, to be returned with some of the common excuses a woman frames to herself upon such an occasion.

If I must do this, I shall certainly add from myself, that a woman who could so treat the man she certainly had loved, was not worthy of being regretted. Truly might she sicken at the sight of her bridal finery; and I find Bennet had been privy to this business, and, like the nurse in Juliet, given the advice a low mind alone is capable of. No entreaties of mine could

prevail upon her to act as, I think, only could extricate her with honour and self-esteem — to give up both. Surely she was become as unworthy of H. D.'s attachment, as of Lord F.'s: but the world clings too closely about her to admit of her thus quitting it, for certainly she must have been a recluse for the rest of her life, had she followed my advice; and seeing I could gain nothing, I desired her to compose herself, and I should have some conversation with Bennet, under whose perfect control she had now placed herself. I left Lady Mary, and sent for her maid to the outer drawing-room. She entered with a sort of defiance in her countenance, which showed me my task was not an easy one. "So my lady, I suppose, has told you all: didn't I advise her for her good, when Lord F. is so generous and so rich."

I said, "Mrs. Bennet, we have quite opposite opinions upon this; but tell me first how you became acquainted with Captain D.'s attachment to Lady Mary?" Here followed, my dear Jane, one of those details which must always be the consequence of such a wretched system, as confidants taken from this rank of life. I saw a

clue to keep this woman's passions under, and failed not to lay hold of it: so I began by asking how long she had been with her lady. "Oh, la, Lady Lucy, that's an old story; I was with the Countess, and my Lord kept me on for my young lady." "And this, Mrs. B., is the return you made for the confidence his lordship placed in you; I shall certainly go directly and acquaint him how unworthily it has been returned."

Here the storm I had intentionally raised worked up in full force. To be disgraced upon the eve of a marriage, you know, entails the loss of such substantial advantages, as I was resolved she should feel to the utmost; yet to get rid of such a tyrant over poor Mary, was absolutely necessary. I said I was sorry her repentance had come too late, as I was resolved to get her turned off. She saw her advantage, and with all the low cunning of her station, threatened to tell both lords all she knew. This was the point I had to bring her to: purchasing silence is so perfectly beneath an upright mind, that, however difficult, I was resolved it should be obtained upon a better footing. I desired her to sit down and consider first the part she

had acted, and then see, if adding to it ingratitude to her young lady, whose happiness she had already injured so much by connivance at a clandestine attachment, would make her a happier woman. At last I got her to be quiet, and say, that if I would secure her a good situation, and only let her stay at giving away of the wardrobe, she would resign her place and go into the country. In my conscience I could not promise her a character to any service, but I told her if she chose to set up as a dress-maker at B——, I should always be within reach of befriending her; and this, though no doubt it was a compromise, was not a dishonourable one. From such a scene, dear Jane, we may draw a useful lesson.

I found Mary in a quiet sleep when I returned, and as I had heard her say when I came in first, that she had not closed her eyes all night, I sat quietly down beside her, and had leisure for an hour's reflection upon the singular situation I was placed in. Could I paint this scene for the benefit of all young females, dear Jane, it might deter others from such conduct. Pale and exhausted she lay, the victim of her

own misconduct, while the glare of every worldly vanity shone full upon her: the very sofa where she slept was covered with roses and silver tissue, carelessly tossed aside as she lay down, and the case with H. D.'s picture almost touched the diamond watch-chain where her name was set beneath Lord F.'s coronet. Such an assemblage! God knows it furnished as many useful thoughts to me as could have been done by the wisest preacher in London. I removed the picture instantly, and as it is to be for some time in my charge, I replaced it as softly as I could where I found it, and closed the *commode*, the key of which I brought home with me, till its contents are sealed up for the unsuspecting writer of these packets.

Mary was refreshed, and soon made herself wonderfully well *up again*. One of my most mortifying feelings was, her being able to act her part so well: did I not write how gay and brilliant she looked. She blushed deeply at this observation, for I made it to her, and said, dear Lucy, may you never know the steps that lead to your too just remark, they are through the dark and stormy regions of concealment and

contending passions, which have each had their full sway over me: but now this load is off my mind, I shall strive to become more worthy of your friendship, and do my utmost to be the wife I think I should have been had Lord F. been my first choice. I was obliged to stay dinner, and make her excuse for not appearing till the evening. When she came to the drawing room, and Lord F. showed the most affectionate interest in the languor, which was attributed to slight indisposition, and he brought out of a portfolio various designs for the improvements he projects *on her account* at his country place, I felt so keenly what, if I could have been guilty of the like, would have been my own pangs at such repeated proofs of his consideration, that I was glad to accept her father's proposal of playing chess. Here, my dear Jane, I quit you: it has been a most agitating business to me, and it is not over, as I hope to prevail upon her to allow me to tell her father. Adieu.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER XL.

Lady S. to Lady T.

Naples, September.

MY DEAREST DAUGHTER,

I AM, at all times, happy to be referred to, when you meet with little difficulties. Although I do not esteem the circumstance of being thought, by other young women, a little too precise and prudish, offers any thing very serious in that way, do not shrink, my dear child, from your duty on this account. I be-lieve; the first step towards doing wrong, is feeling ashamed of doing right; and, while the affectionate eye of a husband beams over you, a little taunt of that sort may be borne with philosophy. Observe how often a doubtful character is sheltered in society, by “her husband’s countenance.” Let then your conduct remain exactly the same, while it is so praiseworthy in his esteem: you may afford to shake

off one half of your acquaintances, my dear, if such is the consequence of shunning folly; the other half will close-pound you, and fill up vacancies with great respectability.

Your father is getting quite young again, and goes out on horseback every day. I frequent my sea-terrace as usual, and it is lovelier than I can describe at this season. I wish you saw an Italian autumn. I carry a book, but I read nature in her own works, much more willingly than any author; and she presents many an interesting page in this climate.

I think your sisters improve daily, both in music and drawing, which are truly desirable accomplishments. You know I am not particularly partial to the foreign style of dancing; so that they do not learn much of what I should not wish them to make use of in England. Fashion is so capricious, that waltzes and quadrilles, and such like, may be quite out of date before their day comes.

We are looking after some very beautiful statuary, for the new gallery which my lord is building. I wish your husband would take a ride, to look after our people: it is somewhat

of a long one, I confess; but when he is mounted, I know distance is nothing. I am glad that you find your neighbourhood agreeable; there is, you know, high authority for praising your country residence, as having “a good neighbour.”

God bless you, my dear: you are never absent from the thoughts of your affectionate

Mother.

LETTER XLI.

Lady S. to Lady 'T'.

Naples, November.

MY dear child will, I fear, think I went abroad for no purpose, but to prose over what might be just as well said at home. True; but you may imagine, or perhaps at a period some time hence you may, that my interest is not so much to amuse you by glowing descriptions of scenery and travels, as to add a little to the solid advantages of your education by ~~any~~ whatever comes first into my mind, as useful to you. A mother, you will one day find, dips her pen in her heart; and absence from you, makes all places alike to me, in so far as writing goes. I am glad to hear you keep off all intrusion from fancied ailments; the real ones are quite sufficient. I often have wondered much, when I saw a young wife (and old ones know better) appear to think being sick

was interesting. A good-hearted man will devote his time to an ailing wife; but be assured, he would rather do so to a healthy one. Perhaps it is gone out, that fashion; but I have seen a half-darkened room, an elegant undress, a sofa, and a husband on tiptoe, made all a very pretty sight. And, I think, I have also, on such an occasion, seen the favoured lap-dog allowed his full share of noise, and his master chid for being "so cross to dear little Shock." Dear, little Shock was also carefully washed and combed of a morning by Mrs. Betty; but if in the least put out of humour, Betty was also reprimanded. All this may be now quite over; and having no interest in any young wife but yourself, I am not likely to suffer by such whims. However, I always use to think, if I were the husband, I should expect, when my wife could suffer the noise of her lap-dog, parrots, and other pets, that my boots need not be complained of. To be the cheerful, contented, every-day, companion of her husband, appears to me so much the natural wish of a young and happy wife, that not only would she carefully avoid the appearance,

but even struggle against the reality of sickness ; and, if the mind goes along with this feeling, it is astonishing how well the frame may be brought to do its part. I may be told how much I wish in holding out such a plan to a young woman : I can only answer, those risk much more, who would carry you to balls and races, as you describe at this moment. As to repining over deprivations in your situation, and wishing for every thing but what you have, remember, “ to be weak is to be miserable ; ” and every female will find this to her cost ; as much as those more fiery spirits, to whom Milton addresses language too pompous for my subject, perhaps ; but it conveys a truth all women would do well to apply at home.

~~—~~Your father is well, and happy in your brother and young E——’s society. The latter is a fine fellow, if we can only keep him from the society of those whose interest it is to mislead him. With our united loves to you and your husband, be assured of my most affectionate regard.

G. S.

LETTER XLII.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Harley-street; November.

THE contents of my last would satisfy you that I must be a painful spectator of this marriage in its progress; and I anxiously wish to be released from town. I believe, and hope, Mary's principles are sound; and that, when her ambition is gratified, she will daily feel more and more humbled in her own eyes: this must be the foundation on which her future respectability is to be raised. Lord F. ~~gains~~ (he little knows by what claims) daily upon my regard and esteem. Poor thing, it would be wrong to accuse her of more than she stands guilty of already; but every smile I see in Lord F.'s presence, I despise her for. And as to those detestable 'wedding-clothes,' I ordered Bennet to remove them out of my sight to any spare room, that I might have no longer any

chance of seeing them. She has resigned all Mr. D.'s letters to me, in sealed packets; and Bennet is to deliver into my hands, unopened, from this date, all that come, as they were under her cover. I dated the outside of one yesterday, to prove to him I had put this bar to the disclosure of his feelings to an *engaged* woman, who had broken her vows to him. She has allowed me to inform her father, after "the happy pair" quit church. What a stake she has placed upon the card she now plays. I would not be her the day of that marriage, for any thing this universe could offer me. Yet, at times, she looks dazzled, and delighted with her prospects. Are you not ashamed to think any woman can have so ~~little~~ little heart? I shall feel I ever owe it to Lord F., to keep a guardian eye over her future conduct: this indeed is all the intercourse I shall keep up; and for his sake, I do that much; for I feel I daily grow colder and colder towards herself. Adieu.

L. M.

LETTER XLIII.

(MARRIAGE.)

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, December 3

YESTERDAY closed the harassing scene I had been so many weeks engaged in: and when Lord F. said, as he left the church-door, "God bless my sweet bride-maid! I am the happiest of men!" I could not help grasping his hand, with as sincere a "God bless you" as ever mortal pronounced. Mary seemed dreadfully affected; and, I should think, a Brussels veil has seldom had more to hide, even within the walls of St. George's, which must have witnessed that ceremony under every possible feeling: but they are silent, and we shall be so too. From the moment we quitted her father's door, I never spoke to her; and I really must own, I could not feel for her. There were abundance of friends to offer lavender water,

and such help to support the "beautiful bride," it would have been an insult to myself if I had been one: and to help to steel my feelings, two packets from H. D. had been given me the night before. These two men, whom a few weeks ago I was totally indifferent to, have now such a hold over my feelings, as quite unfits me for every other duty.

Lord H—— asked me to accompany him to his solitary home; I had intended to do so, and truly grieved I was so soon to chase the smile of pleasure from his lips. But to H. D. I owed it to hurry off the first accounts; and I also felt, with propriety, I could not address him, but under her father's sanction. I was very sorry his sons were absent, but they are, you know, both with the army.

I must get over this part of my task. Great was her father's astonishment; and he feels for the young man just as I do, and means to write along with me. He says he never had the slightest idea of such a thing; and owns that he could not have supposed Mary capable of such conduct. To-morrow you shall hear the remainder. Adieu.

L. M.

LETTER XLIV.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

December, 16—

I HAVE not been able to hold my pen for a week, my dear Jane, but now hasten to close this subject.

Lord H. preferred the particulars going from my pen, and merely inclosed a few lines, which did him great credit: one passage I thought particularly.

“ While I say to my young friend that if my daughter’s engagement had been known to me, I should never have led her to the altar but with your consent, this tribute I pay to your high character; and in dropping the language of an offended parent, I sympathise in the wounds now inflicted by disappointment, as much as I feel humbled by the cause; but you must forgive me for strongly urging you to consider, in its fullest light, the misery which a

clandestine attachment must ever bring into the bosom of a family.

“ I remain, &c.”

These letters, for mine was written first, with all the delicacy due to his situation, are sent under cover to ———, who commands the M——— station at present. I said nothing to exculpate her, you may believe. We must meet to exchange packets when he comes home, but I hope before then he will have recovered from the shock this will give him.

Farewell; I go into the country with Lord H., and wait my mother's return at ——— Hall.

Yours ever,

L. M.

I provided a maid, upon whom I could depend, for Mary; and Lord H. keeps Bennet till all letters from H.D. are over.

LETTER XLV. .

Lady S. to Lady T.

Rome, D  cember.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

I AM much flattered by your saying you wish me to write more frequently, but I think your sisters' letters must be more amusing; and during spring you will hear so much of us from E—— and George, that I shelter my more languid pen under this pretence. My dear, I fear I should annoy you, as my anxiety knows no bounds; and I sometimes destroy a sheet that I have filled on this subject, and commend you to the protection of Heaven, instead of trusting to my own short-sighted care.

You see, my love, you are no loser by this. Your father got us a nice house, and we have a pleasant society. Ten days ago the Countess of H—— opened regular assemblies, twice a week, in the London style; and of course all

the English are to be met with there. I saw one, who I imagine finds himself no more at ease in Rome than in London: it is said he has broken off a fifth marriage engagement at present. Now, upon the rule of believing only half of what we hear, suppose we give him two broken-off marriages, and one very far-gone flirtation: this seems to me quite enough to undermine any man, as a man of honour, without adding two and a half per cent. upon it. Sir W. F. is among our most agreeable acquaintances here; gay, and so happy looking, that he makes others so by the pleasing countenance he shows to the world; and I believe it is upon such people the world does smile.

Lady H. is the life of her circle, and, at forty-five, is as merry and active as she was twenty years ago.

Your sisters are very busy with masters of all kinds. Your father enjoys perfect health, and adds his blessing to that of your attached mother,

G. S.

LETTER XLVI.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

January, Saturday.

I ALWAYS forgot to ask you if you were much surprised at Julia's marriage: I was not, as she had written to me about it, but in the same careless strain she does every thing else. She is no fool, but has so many of Folly's attributes, that I am divided betwixt anger and pity, when I bestow any attention to her concerns. Upon this occasion she cut the matter very short; and being her own mistress, she merely told her aunt, Lady D——, that it was to be; and sending a thousand pounds to her milliner, desired her to make up the *trousseau* to her own mind, and I believe gave herself no further trouble about the matter.

With so large a fortune as Julia had, the road to domestic happiness is so often missed, that probably she may be no worse off than others

who never seek it ; but it appears very heartless to enter into so sacred an engagement merely in barter, as she does money for rank, or higher consideration in society. Of her husband I know nothing but from report, and that speaks well of him.

I regret that you should be obliged to go into Devonshire more and more, my dear Jane, as the winter approaches. Adieu.

Yours ever,

L. M.

LETTER XLVII.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

R—— Priory, Jan. 30th.

I KNOW how anxiously you will expect to hear, my dear Jane, after my return from —— Park : Lord H. and I left it two days ago. Solomon in all his glory was not more splendid than we found Lady F. I drop the name of Mary, and shall consider myself released from a greater intimacy than the Countess of F.'s other acquaintances may aspire to.

As Lord H. had not seen his daughter, I retired to my room, and declined appearing till the meeting was over, and Lord H. came to conduct me down stairs. The marriage had now been over some weeks, and of course I expected to find her quite mistress of her countenance ; and in this I was not mistaken, at first at least. Her husband received us, and ac-

compained her father to the saloon. Of course I took care to go down late, and found her amidst a brilliant assembly ; and all appearance of the festivities of the season, which I had before heard, were not exaggerated. Do you think my heart beat? I dare say more than hers. When we met, dinner being soon announced, I only took a steady view of her after we sat down. You know her style of looks, bloom, softness, eyes full of innocence and benevolence, with, I do (even though a female) admit, the most captivating smile I ever saw upon a countenance : all this, lighted up by the pride of being the object of attention and admiration to one of the first circles of England, and supported as she was with the love of her husband, and supposed forgiveness of her father, no doubt banished all recollection of her former conduct, and I alone turned from this splendid scene, to cast a far-away glance into a solitary cabin tossing on the Mediterranean seas. But it was most fit that my thoughts only should wander there. You may be assured, during the ten days I remained, I never spent one moment in her

presence alone, and she as carefully shunned me. In company, all went on as usual: sometimes I caught her eyes fixed upon me with something of anxiety, but as that is one of the thorns she planted in her own bosom, I saw it unmoved. She must tremble for the consequences, still unknown, of her conduct; but I am resolved she shall never hear from me what they may be; and I trust from the distance, and other circumstances, whatever H. D. may suffer, it shall not reach her.

I have no inclination to describe the magnificence of her residence, or the proposed improvements. They do not talk of being in town till May, which I rejoice at; and when the *éclat* of this first bridal party is over, I hope calm reflection, with a resolution to do her duty, will have time to work its own way. Lord F. appears every thing that is amiable, and his sister also; she remains during the winter, and now takes my place as the intimate of Lady F.: may it never cost her what it has done me.

I go home to-morrow, and we remove to town, upon Lady T.'s account, very soon. You,

I suppose, will be there *en famille* in March, as usual. I am glad this is over, and truly so on her father's account. His eldest son arrived a few days ago.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER XLVIII.

Lady S. to the Countess of E.

Rome, Winter.

MY DEAR SISTER,

AMONG the novelties of this winter here, we have a grandmother a bride, which I scarcely ever expected to see. I blush for women who so expose themselves; but in this case I feel for her family, and only hope they do not feel so much for themselves. Another lady of Scotch-rank is said to marry an artist: the air of Italy must have wonderful effects in softening down the old Scotch pride we have heard so much of.

I have given your son my notes, made up into a little volume, as a guide to all that is best worth seeing here, and begged him to add his own observations on a blank leaf I had bound with it. It will be amusing to see how youth and age view the same objects, if he

writes a fair and free opinion. I tell him I value frankness before the respect he might pay to mine. When last here, he was not in a calm reasoning humour, I suppose, so it appears all new to him. I left to the girls to write of the endless magnificent processions upon their solemn days, when last year went out and this came in; they were fine sights, and as such affected us.

My lord has had a slight attack of gout, but it appears not to take the same hold in this climate of his constitution as in England. Still, I believe, he begins to wish to get home; but it will be the end of the year before we return. The buildings proceed but slowly, and he wishes them roofed in before he returns. E—— has promised to go down to look after them when he has leisure. I think, when there is a gloomy day here, it is remarkably impressive; every thing appears to suit with a heavy air, and the people add to this impression, and look wretched also. Every traveller gives the picture of Italy its last finish, I observe, from a bright sun. I scarcely ever found a book candid enough to talk of a drizzling rain in Italy; at least no such ever fell into my hands if they were printed; and I

was the more struck by it when I experienced the strong contrast it makes. We look for heavy fog of a yellowish tinge near the Thames, where millions of chimneys contribute to heighten the gloom ; here there is little smoke, and it seldom happens that we have such a day ; but when it does, such an outcry there is. — I am not surprised at finding an Italian I met a few days ago who preferred Scotland to London, because he said he could breathe freer : London air choked him. My dear sister, I am ashamed to fill a sheet with such dull stuff ; but I am no letter-writer when my subjects are not interesting. I often envy those who can write without a subject.

Yours ever,

With sincere affection,

G. S.

LETTER XLIX.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

February 1.

I FOUND Mrs. U—— with Mamma when I got home, and her grand-children. Poor little motherless things, I could be very fond of them; they are sweet babies: the youngest is only three years old. We are in preparation for going early to town upon Lady T.'s account: you know I shall have leisure to write at pleasure there, my dear Jane; but nothing to write about, which is the pity.

Mrs. U. had denounced all the woes of freckles, and every mischief, from my having “thrown my sun-expelling mask away” while in Scotland; and now she thinks it a good joke to say, I did not find sun enough to brown me; but I can see nothing in a poke bonnet. We have very good letters from Frederick; he is charmed with an army, even at rest; “What

then should I have been had I shared its laurels !”

We have had a few days’ visit from Miss C., full of Scotch questions ; and I now see how long it is (if ever) before the language is lost, or I should rather say Scotch accent. She enquired particularly after the D—— family ; and when Mamma told her that she found some of the daughters of that house established up to the highest pitch of modern manners, — education, and every thing in their families quite *à la mode de Londres*, this set the old lady’s mind to work, and she gave so delicious a picture of the real good old Edinburgh style, I must put it down in her own words : the elder branches had been the intimates of her early years, and thus she describes the *ménage*. “ When I walked to —— Square of a morning, I found my lady at her knitting, her spectacles on, and attending at the same time to her eldest daughter’s plain seam, probably a shirt for her brother, and my lady was very nice in the gathers being well drawn up. Two of the other girls had just finished with old Farmer, the writing-master, and were bustling away slates and copy-

books for the rolling up the carpet for Mr. Strange, the dancing master : a good Turkey carpet it was too, and never a nail had pinned it to the floor. My lord, I remember, that winter had his first threatening of gout, and kept the fire-side ; but when Mr. Strange's kit was heard, I just see the good old man lay down the Scotch paper, and take out his snuff-box, while he looked with great delight at the fine young creatures getting their lessons ; and when the reel began, the little one (not little now, I hear) was held by the governess to go through the figure : four of them would be in Mr. Strange's hands, I think, by that time. The room, too, I mind as well as yesterday, with the family-pictures, and a shelf, with the well-used few books my lord kept there for his own reading, and the tea-chest and great sugar magazine below the side-board, with old Rover's plate of water and brimstone-roll in it ; I just see it all as if it were yesterday." I asked her what a side-board had to do with the business of the day ? " My dear, I forgot you did not know it was always the custom to live in the dining room, at least till my lady's airing ; and she went down to the

sands every day, or along the Leith road, if the tide was in; and she never received visits till the masters were away, except such as myself, who made no odds. I am an old-fashioned person, Lady Lucy; but I think there was a sort of family comfort in all this, that I like better than my lady in her inner drawing room, her husband in his study, or at the New Club, and the children, master, and governess, all as far from their parents' eye as possible. No; the morning began with the prattle of the young folks at breakfast with their father and mother, and they were never much parted till they bade good night, and then I've seen sometimes the little faults, and oftener the promising dispositions of their children, fill up half an hour's chat after the door was shut, before the whist-table was set."

This was so perfect a picture of her mind's canvass, that I could have listened a longer while, but she fell into a train of thought of her own, and with a half-tune, half a whistle, to which her foot beat time, she finished her meditations without further conversation. Miss

C.'s tastes and language are unchanged by a residence of nearly twenty years in England.

My dear Jane, I hope you placed your feet for a good toast upon the fender before you began, in which case my letter deserves your best thanks as a skreen, and the prose has not been at all too long from

Yours,

LUCY GOSSIP.

LETTER L.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

— Hall, February.

MAMMA had a child's ball last night here, and as very few families had left this neighbourhood, it was very well attended. Sir Henry was delighted with the little moppets. The H.'s were all here; I believe there were fifty children, from fifteen to five years old: Maria, at seventeen, you may conclude was queen of the fête. We missed Frederick very much, as he is still young enough to have delighted any little one with his spirits and tricks. The parents looking on, would have been a very good answer to those who tell us this is a cold and selfish world, without feeling: vanity might have its share too, but till I know more about all that, my dear Jane, I cannot tell you. We left them the floor entirely, as so many of these little balls are huddled over to make way for the after-piece, which we would

not allow. At some time of the evening, Mamma desired me to go and attend Lady C. F. in the library, where I found her, in pale blue satin, and a book in her hand; but apparently she had been weeping. I knew she had no child out of arms, so I could not think what had discomposed her; and, indeed, I am scarcely acquainted with her. She laid down her book, and said it was very foolish, really quite weak; but as she had lost a sweet child three weeks before, she could not remain in the dancing-room. Natural, I could not help saying, instead of weak or foolish; and I did my utmost to amuse her, and got her to join a party where there was music and cards. Dear Jane, I saw a similar case in Scotland; but I remarked there it was taerted, as indeed most things are, quite differently: no blue satin, — a child is mourned for at all ages in the usual dress; and, instead of attempting thus to defraud Nature of her tribute of sorrow, which you see cannot be done, the weeping mother only dried her tears from the efforts which the duties of her family called upon her to make, and then only it occurred to me to compare the customary modes of the two countries. I believe, with us,

no child is in general mourned (outwardly) under ten or twelve years old.

We go to town next week, and I shall find it dull enough : Sir Henry joins us in March, but not sooner. I regret your remaining in Devonshire, but if your aunt's health is restored by it, we must not regret it.

Lady T. is impatient for us now. Adieu,

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER LI.

Lady S. to Lady T.

Rome. No date, except Friday.

WE have so often talked over the effects of superstition, and its splendid decorations, my dear child, that there can be little left to say; and indeed, had I not met with a remarkable instance of its better parts, I do not think I should have renewed it. I mentioned a very amiable widow I had become intimate with, who lives in retirement, in the convent of St. ——. I noticed her a few evenings ago, in very earnest devotion, before one of the altars in St. Peter's, at the close of one of their splendid exhibitions, where lights, music, saints, altars, and every possible means of rousing the feelings, had been resorted to; and I stood for some time, as my widow still lingered in conversation with a priest, till I could join her. I found her more calm than usual; and we retired

to one of those long-pillared stretches of this wonderful building, where you may talk and wander for hours, particularly as she said the lights would not be extinguished till morning. Finding her so placid, I ventured to enquire more into the tenets of her church, than I had ever done; not for information, but in hopes, by leading her a little on, I might expose some of the absurd superstitious practices in which, I had reason to fear, she herself indulged; and her long talk with the priest, I feared to be only some new and trying scene prepared for her. Of her history I had a very slight idea; but found her young, and apparently quite free from monastic engagements, and a widow. I concluded, that some very uncommon circumstances had driven her from the world; and from the agitation her devotional exercises generally threw her into, I wished to get more at the bottom of her real situation. Her husband has been two years dead, and I could not attribute to grief alone the effects I observed. She answered all my objections, and combatted some; others, she allowed, might, in protestant eyes, be justly founded: but when

I came to the one I suspected would weigh heaviest with her,—the mass for departed souls, she did not answer me at first, and I continued to say, that in every shape was denied us, as prayers for those who were withdrawn from a visible world we considered bordering upon impiety.—“Impiety!” she murmured, and leant against the pillar where we had paused; “Oh! utter not such language to me, unless you would see my reason desert me. On that I live and hope, that alone chains me to the foot of those altars, and without that support what should I be? My sweet friend, I alarm you; but you have touched the chord on which vibrates my whole existence. I adored my husband, and he made me the widow of a ——.” I cannot, my dear child, name a word you may supply. Here, indeed, is a point which feeling would favour, while reason must condemn; but those who could tear that last consolation from the heart of this unhappy woman must be made of different materials from me. Let us hope a merciful Creator, who “remembereth we are dust,” has appointed a way of escape.

Yours affectionately,

G. S

LETTER LII.

Lord T, to Lady S.

Grosvenor-square, Tuesday.

I HAVE the happiness, my dear Lady S., to announce the birth of my son; and to add, that both mother and child are as well as you or I could desire. He is a fine stout little fellow, and fills the room with his voice already. I shall write again in a few days, and leave all further particulars to the ladies. With my most respectful good wishes to yourself and Lord S., I have the honour to be, my dear Lady S., your most affectionate son,

T.

LETTER LIII.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Grosvenor-square, March

MY cousin Lady T—— has got a son, and I am appointed head-nurse. I am not very well qualified for the business, but I must do my best. Lord T. is a most affectionate and excellent man. I think Mary has been very fortunate. But I must have my laugh out. Enter Dr. Coddle, saluted by Mrs. Caudle, the nurse: “ Lord, sir, did you ever see so fine a babe?” “ Never, madam.” — “ My lord’s eyes and my lady’s beautiful mouth.” “ Quite perfect, madam: a more beautiful child never was born. But I think the cot is swung too high.” “ Sure, doctor, I must know them there matters better than you: I think it quite right. And the satin curtains are lined with green, by my own directions.” — “ Ma’am, I yield to your superior judgment.” — “ Oh! doctor, you are so polite.

Nancy, bring the caudle. Doctor, help Lady Lucy."—"My Lady, may I have the honour to hope to see you act principal in good time." This wit really overset the little patient. I had left, and I made my escape to the drawing-room as soon as possible. Such a business it is, Jane ! oiling door-hinges, and all the house so quiet ! Mamma is always in Mary's room. But I can't have my usual resource of books, there is such a fuss ; and when the child cries, all is confusion. Poor Lord T. is half distracted among the gossips. Well, I shall write no more till " my month is up."

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER LIV.

Lady S. to the Countess of E.

Rome, March.

THE birth of your son, my dearest child, has made us all truly happy. God bless you, and him, and your very amiable husband. My sister and Lady Lucy are very kind in giving me such budgets, which I greedily devour. May you long be a happy mother, my child.

- I am going to make a request of your lord, my dear daughter; which is, when London “goes out of town,” that you, your child, and your husband, will join us. Travelling is so easy, the infant can take no harm; and as we propose being at home before winter, it will be
- only a few months’ amusement to you. Pray use your influence to bring this about. Your sisters are much charmed by finding themselves aunts, and if you agree to my plan, they will show you every thing, and tell you so much

about it, that they will appear to your English notions quite foreign. But the art of talking is soon learnt here: perhaps no where very difficult with our sex. But I mean, talking with reference to the classical objects of interest: and the printed little books, upon all the buildings, are a great help. Lord E—— and George left us a week ago, and will be in London, I suppose, in April. I hope E. will give his mother much pleasure, we all think so well of him; only he requires to lose a little of his foreign talk. George is of a happy, easy temper, and has no thought beyond youthful sports and pursuits; a horse, dog, or gun, are his favourite companions. We now move to Florence, and shall meet you, when you fix your time and place, where you like, about July, or the first of August. I should hope you would be on your way. Adieu, my dear child. With our united good wishes for you and yours, ever believe me your affectionate mother,

G. S.

LETTER. LV.

Lady S. to the Countess of E.

Rome, April.

YOUR good accounts, my dear sister, are a cordial to my heart : God bless my child ! I must restrain a mother's feelings upon this new character of a beloved daughter. I thank Lady Lucy for the use of her pen in my service. Lord T. writes me that she restrained her usual lively tone to a whisper for a fortnight ; and he adds, she will make a blessed wife to some one worthy of her. I truly believe it ; and so much of the father is already in Lord T., that he expresses as much gratitude for her superintendence of the nursery, as if it held a dozen ; but at the same time adds, that he should have been bewildered if Lady L. had not stood between him and the gossips. I hope the confinement has not been hurtful to you, my dear sister, as he says he

kept you constantly in Mary's room. Thank you all again and again for taking my place.

I wish I had any thing amusing or interesting to write from here, but as I have not, the less of your time I take the better. Believe me, my dear sister, at all times your sincerely attached

G. S.

LETTER LVI.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Harley-street. Tuesday after Easter.

REALLY, my dear Jane, if you complain to me that your aunt gave you an over-dose, as you call it, of being "very good" during Passion-Week, I can do no better for you than to prescribe as much of Greenwich Fair upon Easter Monday as you can swallow; and if it don't prove an antidote, I do not know what will. I was there with a large party yesterday; the day was so fine, it really was a beautiful sight, and I returned loaded with sugar sweethearts, which I am sending off to the little H.'s, in quantity sufficient to employ the apothecary for a month, unless they believe me when I say, they never were meant "for eating."

I am not sure if it is not a little popish to sum up our devotions with such broad mirth the day they conclude; but you know my creed

upon that subject; and though, perhaps, I should gain little in the eyes of those who are much my superiors in goodness for saying so, I am often more satisfied with myself on my return from a scene of mirth, than from one of devotion. Shall I tell you why, dear Jane? Pray put on a black mantle, and your uncle's night-cap for a cowl, and then I must speak truth to my reverend father confessor. Then, father, pardon a daughter when she says, she returns from a scene where, having seen in others, and felt the snares which may lurk under pleasurable sensations to herself, she looks, with abhorrence, at the tempter glozening his tale in the ear of his intended victim, or feels virtue strengthened in her breast from the display of charms purposely to ensnare, by those whose "vows are registered in heaven." It is in humility she turns from such exhibitions of human frailty; and an earnest prayer to be preserved from the like may be found as acceptable breathed in the scene of temptation, as in the more sacred retirement of the closet.

If this, my dear Jane, is an exaggerated picture, then you must suppose I have seen it in

my dreams, not in real life. Why a church should fail of leaving me as much satisfied, may be easily understood by any one not enthusiastically heated into blindness to themselves,

Well, when I began with Greenwich Fair, I did not expect to return to church again; but you must, as usual, my dear Jane, tolerate the rambles of my pen.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER LVII

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, April 3.

I AM sorry that your attendance upon your aunt, my dear Jane, carries you to Devonshire; but I trust both of your patients, for I fear your uncle is one too, will benefit by your good nursing in that mild climate.

I believe I have had more reason to laugh and cry within the last two days, than any one ever had; but, if you have patience for a long story, you shall judge for yourself:—

A few days ago, Mamma got a note from Mr. B., to say he begged to see Lady Lucy for half an hour the following evening, at any time most agreeable. This man, you know, possesses immense wealth, and has always been said to make the best use of it: he had befriended one or two young men Mamma recommended to him, and I concluded some little well-intended

kindness was the object of his visit to me. The hour was fixed; and I ordered candles to the library, where I received Mr. B. Sam was rather surprised that, when he gave him his hat, he would not part with his great coat too, but preferred hanging it over a chair, and bowed Mr. Sam out of the room. Mr. B. is a fresh, good-looking man, I suppose approaching to fifty; but, from the plain style of his dress and manners, perhaps he looks older than he is. We entered into some common chat, and he then said, "Lady Lucy, I have, in the pockets of that coat, something to show you;" and he unfolded, from a large, soft leather case, the most beautiful jewels I ever beheld, not set, but merely fixed together, so as to display their various kinds: every gem was there I had ever heard of, and in a profusion which I *never* had heard of. I asked how he could venture through the street (for he walked) with such valuable articles. He laughed, and said, "Ah! no one suspects a person of my appearance; besides, they were closely fastened up in the breast-pockets: these, Lady Lucy, are but a small part of my wealth." And here, my dear

Jane, followed a dazzling account of all that could tempt a sordid mind : and, to shorten my tale as much as possible, I found he hoped to induce me to be the track-horse, to drag this weighty machine through the stream of high life.

“ I am left on the threshold of society, and every day feel that, without connections, I can make no way in that circle, where alone it is my ambition to gain a place.” My love of novelty of character overcame my inclination to laugh ; and, with what I supposed just encouragement enough to make him think, for a moment, that the bait would take, I asked him, if he had ever considered how a woman, who must be bought at so high a price, (for I was offered free disposal of his immense fortune,) would treat him ; and, also, having given her such unqualified power, how he should treat her, or what prospect he could hope to enjoy of domestic happiness. Jane, he looked at me with a smile of so much benevolence, that I really admired a countenance in which I had never before seen any expression at all pleasing, and answered, “ If I know myself, I am no churl,

and to the woman who had conferred such an honour upon me, I think I should prove a good husband; and to her honour and heart I should trust all the rest. I openly and honestly, Lady Lucy, have explained what leads me to aspire to your hand, and in candour was obliged to show you the grounds on which I hoped to obtain it." I could not let him proceed; but, folding in careful succession all the jewels up, I explained to him how totally impossible it was for me to comply with his wishes. But it came across my mind, that I might find him a wife exactly such as he desired, and do her an inestimable service. Poor Fanny, you know, leads a wretched life with her mother; and having all the rank he could desire, and every personal quality that is amiable, I begged him to give me his attention for a little, as he was rising, with a look of blank indifference, when I presented his package; or rather I should do him the justice to say, he pushed it from him with a look of disgust, which added to the interest I felt in this singular man. It was a delicate matter to propose a substitute so immediately, but I plucked up courage, and, taking

his hand, I said, I should esteem it a very happy circumstance if I could, in any way, promote his wishes, short of giving a hand where it could not be accompanied by a gift more worthy of acceptance; but that I had a young friend, whose rank in life was exactly such as he wished in his wife, daughter to the late Lord H., and niece to the present Duke of ——; that in herself she was lovely and amiable, but not happy under her mother's roof; and that I could safely say, if she accepted him, such was the perfect uprightness of her character, that he might rest satisfied she would make him happy. His countenance brightened at this prospect; and he added to all he formerly said, "that if he could provide a happy home to one so amiable, it would enhance the value of my gift." He refused to carry back his jewels, so I locked them up in the book-case drawers next the fire, and presented him with the key. My dear Jane, I was in agony when he refused to take it, and fell upon a middle course—I sealed it up with his own seal, and thus got off so heavy a-charge.

I should be worth robbing at this moment. I invited him next evening to a small party, where I promised he should be made acquainted with Fanny, to whom I would give no hint of my views. Adieu, till to-morrow.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER LVIII

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, 3d April

You keep, post after post, wondering how I pass my time, so as not to weary during these dull weeks in town. My dear Jane, I must pay you so bad a compliment as to tell you, that the only dull thing I meet with in London, is your condolence upon my being kept here. I think the person who can weary where so extensive a field for rational amusement is daily before them, must have very little resource indeed: I assure you, every avenue I find which opens new objects to me, leads to enjoyment; and by means of a warm pelisse and snug bonnet, I have seen and heard, during those "dull weeks," more than I ever did before here; and when you recollect that I have Sir Henry for my guide, your wonder will perhaps

cease. He is now fairly established, books and all, in Harley-street. *A-propos* to books, he employs me to arrange his, and often hints at the continuance of those quiet evenings, after town fills, just as the swallows appear in the country. He is a good, kind uncle; and "teaching the young idea how to shoot" is his delight. But I propose soon to show him, that the young idea has shot beyond the limits of his study, as (though very gradually) I have begun already to draw him a little out of it. He returned with habits more recluse and solitary than I should like, in one so fitted for society. When he first came to us, I used to go with a gentle tap, "Dear uncle, the sun is fine, will you take a turn, and I shall not keep you long." Now, I boldly enter without the tap: "Come, uncle, the horses are at the door, and depend upon it, you have seen the last of your books for to-day." He calls me a restless girl, but attends me with all that kind sweetness of temper which yields to the wishes of another, so gracefully in him. And thus I hope to restore him to his former social habits.

I dare say you expect a few pages upon all my seeings, and hearings, of which I make such boast. But no; your ladyship has lost all title to claim details from me, as you could not keep my Scotch gossip from the eyes of some friend of Mamma's, who "was vastly shocked to find, that Lady Lucy let her pen run so fast: she did not always write good grammar, but she hoped it was a Scotch error only." So some one must have had a peep over your shoulder, last autumn, who, in reading a letter, "starts a syllable, and hunts it down;" while my pen had run its usual race after things, not words. We must recommend the polite letter-writer, dear Jane, to such readers, I think, in future.

How are you in Devonshire as to weather? I am still furred from boot to bonnet. But I do see a solitary white dress, coming forth like an early primrose, which has burst through the icy bands of winter. I certainly should never have been a spring poet, as the mortification of a chilling blast, after I had poured forth all my praise of the season, would have tossed my poem into the fire. No, no, commend me to

the month of July, in England, then, I may have my imagination warmed by sun, and otherwise regaled with perfumes, but in a cold day, the violets are scentless, and all my fancy flies. Adieu.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER LIX.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, Tuesday.

I COULD not find time to go on with Mr. B.'s history till to-day. I do not think I was justified in saying I had cause to laugh; but you will allow, if vexation at one of the worst views we can take of human nature be affecting, I had cause for tears in what now follows.—I drove next day to Lady H.'s, and found her as usual, surrounded by all those whose talents she patronizes, and who return her praise with flattery too gross for any ear but her own. I was told Fanny was not at home, and after as short a visit as I could decently pay, took my leave; but when half down stairs, Fanny's maid called me back, and told me her young lady was come home, but in "such a taking," she could not go to the drawing-room. I flew up to Fanny's room, and found her with her

pelisse on, but her hat thrown off, and appearing in extreme agitation. "For God's sake, Fanny, what ails you?" She sent her maid away, and then told me her mother had sent her into the city, to endeavour to get her jewels out of the Jew's hands before the day she had to appear at court. Figure, if you can, such a wretch, to send this lovely girl on such an errand, and attended only by her own maid. It really made me shudder; and I could not help thinking the maid of such a mistress must be as bad as herself. She had failed, of course, as the debt was four thousand pounds! but they were very civil; and one, she said, had twice risen from his desk, and seemed to feel much compassion for her situation; and offered any assistance *she* might require, though not an *item* would they yield to her mother. She now was in terror for the reception Lady H. would give her. I tried to compose her, and got her dressed, and refreshed, called for some luncheon for myself, and made her take a little wine and water, and, half playfully, said I must be her attendant, and dress her hair; and with one little matter or other, I lightened

her mind of this business, and promised to get her mother to let her go home with me before she knew the result of the morning. I returned to the drawing-room, and said I had just seen Fanny, and as we had a little party for music in the evening, I begged to carry her home, and Mamma's carriage should bring her back at night. Whether her conscience struck her that some indulgence was due to her, or, as I rather suspect, she guessed from my manner that the agitation of the morning had rendered her unfit to appear, I know not. She had a room full of company ; before whom, she durst not betray feeling of any kind ; and, so giving a hurried consent, desired me to do as I liked, and give her " love " to Fanny. Such love !

My point was gained ; and, telling the sweet girl to bring her evening dress, I carried her home ; but first refreshed her by a drive into the country ; and, before evening, I had so far recovered her, that she looked, though rather pale, very well. The acquaintance began in as promising a manner as I could wish ; and they meet again at dinner to-day here. I told Sir Henry, and he took care to distinguish Mr.

B. by marked attention. I took upon myself, next day, to manage Lady H., and got her to remain quiet, till I should suggest some means of getting back her jewels. Fanny is now at rest upon that subject, because, I assured her, I hoped to save her mother's credit; and Lady H., with the meanness which it is not want of charity to attribute to such a character, is at my devotion. Adieu, dear Jane.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER LX.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, April:

I HAVE not written for a week, my dear Jane, and a week has done all I wished. Fanny agrees to become Mrs. B., and he is as happy as possible. This is not a case of romance, but a national exchange, if I may so call it, for the good of both parties; and Fanny feels so much esteem for Mr. B. during this fortnight's acquaintance, and has so much cause, that I believe many marriages upon longer acquaintance have not so good an aspect often. All being adjusted to their mutual satisfaction, I went to assist Fanny in breaking this to her mother; when, feeling she should so soon be freed from her control, she exerted a degree of self-possession which astonished me. •

After the first burst was over,—"A pretty

business! pray who is Mr. B., Lady Lucy?" We had purposely concealed his situation in the world till now, and I took upon myself to explain that.

"Mr. B., Lady H., is a man of exemplary character, and whose situation, though unconnected with rank, is most respectable; his wealth is boundless, and your daughter is to command any share of it which can contribute to her happiness; and if she has the misfortune to survive her husband, five thousand a year is the jointure he fixes, besides his town and country residences, with jewels, which he presented her with this morning to an immense value."—"Well, Fanny, that is something; you'll have all the set-out possible of course, and make a distinguished figure in town." "Pardon me, Mamma, it is both my own and Mr. B.'s taste to live for this year in the country; and he is gone to settle a purchase to-day of a beautiful place in Essex, where we shall fix immediately after our marriage."—"Astonishing, child! are you mad? What apology shall I make to the Duke for your choice, if you go and mope in the country?" "Mamma, I hope when my uncle becomes

acquainted with Mr. B., he will find sufficient apology in his character."

This was a mode of reasoning to which Lady H. was quite insensible. However, I had filled her mind so perfectly with Mr. B.'s worldly advantages, and no ways insensible to the hoped-for influence she might obtain, she begged to be made acquainted with him, and being herself much engaged, left the *trousseau* to my charge.

Saturday.

I was obliged to quit my pen some days ago, my dear Jane; since when I was again called to Fanny's assistance, as she had procured the jewels, but did not know how to deliver them without hurting her mother's feelings, (a fear more worthy of her own than necessary;) and I breakfasted there this morning, when finding Lady H. in high spirits, I said, "Well, certainly, Fanny, you have the most generous lover that ever was: only think, Lady H., he came to me with the most modest look possible, and said, not knowing what might suit a young lady's taste, he begged me to present a little pocket-book, from which he hoped she would please herself; and

this good man was out of the room before I could say how delicate and kindly I felt he treated Fanny. This was yesterday: the case contained five notes, of one thousand pounds each, and the extravagant girl has paid away four of them already." Before Lady H. could say any thing, Fanny, with a blush as deep as if guilt sate upon her lips, added, "My dear mother, you will find upon your dressing-table my wedding gift to you, for which I paid four notes of that kind-hearted man's generous gift; the other thousand will do all I require, and, at Mr. B.'s desire, I have resigned my portion of ten thousand pounds for your use."—"Well, you are a good girl; but you know, Fanny, these jewels will be all your own after, as I can't sell them." "No, Mamma, enclosed in the case, you will find a formal resignation of them in the style Mr. —, your attorney, thought requisite to give effect to my wish, that they should be entirely yours, to apply to any purpose you may in future think proper."

Lady H. was really affected by this; but Fanny firmly, though mildly, declined her thanks, saying, "Mamma, in accepting Mr. B., it is my

firm resolution never to trespass upon the unbounded liberality of his character; and I here avow my positive determination never to draw his purse for any person or purpose connected with my family: not yourself, my dear mother, shall ever (though I hope in God I shall not be put to the trial) induce me to depart from this resolution. If I am to guide his wealth, it shall flow only in the source most beneficial to him, and shall not be applied by me to any other purpose."

This very excellent girl will make him truly happy, I see. The marriage takes place during the first week of May. Adieu.

Yours,

M.

LETTER LXI

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane,

Harley-street, April

I THINK it very entertaining, my dear Jane, that you should be the confidant of a married woman's grievances, and as droll that you ask my advice. You state your friend's case as bad enough indeed, and almost hopeless; but as I suppose the great machine in the interior is much the same, whether set a-going by the ponderous wheel of matrimony, or worked by the lesser springs we employ in celibacy, I shall, having an hour to spare, take your friend's affairs under my spiuster consideration. The chief complaint is, he is a surly Devonshire Squire, her spouse—she herself being all softness and sentiment, and educated in Grosvenor Square. What is done cannot be undone, is in every one's mouth; but it is not always as frequently considered that it may be

made the best of; and I advise her not to think the worse of her squire for appearing a little surly, — an honest heart often lies under such a character; and it may indeed only be put on to hide the mortification he feels at his inferiority to his wife, in appearance at least; for if I were at his elbow I should say, “ Pluck up a little, my friend, and I will prove that for every showy accomplishment she possesses, you can find a sterling virtue to match it. Oh! but you must positively not scowl me off so, or I can have nothing to do with you. Come, let me show you in a better light to yourself; all that ails you is, you are too modest not to feel that your rough coat appears a rude covering in her presence, and you therefore adopt a voice and manner to suit it. Now I should say, the awkwardness of your present feelings, is a proper punishment for selecting a wife so opposite to yourself in tastes, manners, and appearance; but that is one of Cupid’s sly tricks, and, for the mischief he may do, he is himself answerable. I only beg of you not to think it unmanly or beneath you to lower your tone of matrimonial admonition, or to yield a little to the tastes of her whom you

have made your partner for life, when so great an object may be attained as domestic comfort." So much for the gentleman : now give me the lady into my dressing-room, and I will use my female privilege of disrobing her ; and I shall say, " Since you find, my pretty young wife, that I have taken your airs and graces, talents and toilette, from you, and buckled up those flowing ringlets out of your eyes under a matron's mob, and clad you in Devonshire brown russet, let me see the vast difference between you and your husband ; strive better to suit him, and you will soon find him suit you."

I cannot, my dear Jane, imagine any thing in character really sturdy enough to hold out against this mode of treating it, if mixed with a proper sense of our own faults, as well as of those of our near connections, be he brother, husband, or friend, with whom our lot in life is cast.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER LXII.

*Mrs. H. to the Countess of F*Richmond, April 27th

MY DEAR LADY L.

AFTER spending a week with you, will you forgive my saying I was happy to find myself at home again. It is no great wonder that I should have lost my relish for a world, which long ago must have lost its relish for me, but I own it does astonish me to see how few people of my own age seem to be aware of this truth; they go the same round, complain of it as insipid, yet never retire to the natural resources of advanced life. Many of my former friends have seen their families reared around them, settled happily, and seem, I should think, to have little more to do with this world than to prepare for a better yet I found those I particularly allude to, still at their card-tables, or haunting the scenery of past enjoyment, and

seeking, I suppose, to banish thought, by mixing with those whose thinking days are not yet begun.

I dare say you will smile, and say my self-satisfied view of my own opposite conduct, savours of that pride which it is our duty to subdue. No, my dear friend; I pity more than blame them, and wish, where esteem still retains its hold, I could inspire them with those tastes which still give brightness to my declining years. My children are all well, and this fine season I hope soon will tempt you and Lady Lucy to come to Richmond for a few days.

Believe me, at all times, my dear Lady E.,
your sincere friend,

II.

LETTER LXIII.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

April 27th.

I HAVE had a sad interview with H. D.; the particulars I really have not resolution to go over. He came home on pretence of health, and I see has some view not explained; but he gave me his solemn promise not to attempt to speak to Lady F. I acquainted (by his permission) my uncle with the whole business, and he takes particular interest in him. What a fearful thing it is to be under the control of such violent passions: he really frightens me, he raves so. I own I cannot understand how such conduct in a woman does not cure a man at once.

Lady T. went out last night for the first time, blooming and beautiful, after her confinement, and she was my *chaperone* to Lady C.'s

assembly: a brilliant one it certainly was, and we heard it buzzed round, "Ah! have you seen the Turkish room?" But the crowd was so great, Lady T. and I did not reach this show till late in the evening, and it had only two people in it when we entered; these two were Julia and Sir F. H. I thought she shrunk from the glance I threw to her. Sir F. approached quite in his usual way: "Pray walk in, you are the very Hourî to whom Mahomet would assign his third heaven." Lady T. was occupied with a painting of Circassian slaves, and I could not let this couple escape so easily, so took up Sir. H. in his own manner, and told him, as "I saw the spider's bridge could not carry Julia without threatening her with instant destruction on her passage to that heaven, I should not venture myself where danger was so evident;" and by drawing her into conversation, I put her reluctant arm through mine, and followed by Lady T. left the room. The party had now broken into different groups, but Lord T. joined us, and then I felt quite at ease: my brother E.

gave Julia his arm, and so the thoughtlessness of having suffered a *tête-a-tête* with such a man I hope escaped observation.

She really vexes and provokes me. Adieu.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER LXIV.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, May 10

WITH my wedding gloves only thrown off, and my favour still on, I sit down to give you some account of Fanny's marriage. I went, at eight o'clock, to give the finish to my bride's attire, and throw her veil gracefully off her face, as she had no feeling to hide: and though all brides must, of course, look lovely, yet, in truth, there shone in her appearance a look of calm content, that came from the heart. I told you, or meant to do so, that she declined having her jewels set for this season, so she was simply dressed; and I presented her to Mr. B., who had begged to see her and me alone, before the party assembled, and he appeared as happy as a man could be: he insisted upon ornamenting us both with costly necklaces of diamonds and pearls and, I

believe, before nine o'clock in the morning, such decorations were never put on more cheerfully, and a kiss of Fanny's blooming cheek spoke both our thanks. She must have charmed him, for she took both his hands, and, for the last time, before she became his wife, assured him, she was putting on the 'chains of wedlock with as much satisfaction as her best friends could desire; and as she stood, radiant in innocence and truth, before her delighted lover, I don't think it is possible to paint a more beautiful sight. She wished him to feel quite sure of her perfect esteem and conviction, that he would make her happy; and his eyes glistened his heart-felt gratitude. The gay *cortège* now drew up, and the Duke carried Lady H., Fanny, and myself; the rest all followed: and between this and their driving off, the time appears so short, it bewilders me to think it is all over. She went through the ceremony in a calm devout manner. There was no pause after; and they set out for Essex. Lady H. gave a *déjeuné*, at which I was present, for the last time I ever intend to do her the

honour of eating in her house. I believe she will go abroad. Fanny has made her quite comfortable, if she knows how to continue so. Adieu, my dear Jane.

Yours,

L. M

LETTER LXV.

Lady S. to the Countess of E.

Genoa, May 10th, 18—

I MET our old friend, Lady T. C., a few days ago, and was very sorry to find her here in bad spirits, and indifferent health. She had remained too long at Rome, I think. Though one may delight in ruins, and recollections attached to them, yet even classical gloom should not be too much encouraged; it is elegant and refined, but answers none of the useful purposes of life. I am the more led to make this remark, from finding, while she wanders thus over the continent, it is but "restless idleness at best," for she can, by no change of scene, shake off the real cause of her present state of mind; which, you will regret to hear, is a disagreement with her son; and, from even her own account, I think she is much to blame. How often one finds that most endear-

ing tie rudely broken, which appears to me very strange; and having sons of my own, I look to such a breach with deep interest. I believe this youth to be good in essentials, and she brings forward no trait of vice; surely, then, there is something wrong on her side — no pains taken to conciliate his feelings and affections; faults, I fear, harshly pointed out, and a want of confidence and open family intercourse, at an age when passion is so much stronger than reason. I cannot figure a mother, allowing any cause to estrange her son from her, as she does not know what she may drive him to. I tried to point out to her, that she should subdue her own feelings, and argue down those violent fits of irritation. She was not willing to listen to me; but as I am sure his heart is good, I brought it very home to her; and when she said she should soon return to England, but that she had no hopes he would ever again join her, I could not help asking her, how she could rear such a wish, as her health is so much broken; and wretched would be the day he closed the grave over an unforgiving mother. You will wonder at my courage, but I fairly

told her, at four-and-twenty, I considered she was laying the foundation of his future misery by her present conduct. I believe he is still in England; and I hope they will yet meet in peace.

Did I write you how much I liked Count P. and his lady? She is a most charming woman, and lives in her chateau, a blessing to all ranks of people near her. She received part of her education in England: her children, society, and every thing about her, marks good regulation. My lord says she reminds him much of Madame de V——, whom he knew formerly, at the time he was so long at Leghorn.

I hope, my dear sister, you are not one of those who expect, when they open a letter with a foreign post-mark, that it is to contain matter for chat with half their acquaintances. You know I see sights with different feelings from most people; and at any rate, so much has been said and written on the subject, that no one, I think, can add a novelty: but we are very soon to see, what must interest us much, a young Venetian take the veil; and as she is to be allowed some indulgences, not common,

I understand by that there are peculiarities in her case: for instance, she will not submit to all the mummary of dress and jewels with which they deck their victim; and, as I am told, the ceremony is to take place without her retiring to have her hair cut off, and so on. I learnt these particulars from a young person the girls get lessons from, at the St. Sophia, the convent and church where this is to take place. Drawing is particularly well taught there; and my lord conquered his dislike to the girls going, as I send Mathew with them; he understands French, you know, so acts as an excellent *chaperon*.

Ever yours affectionately,

G. S.

LETTER LXVI.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, May

I COULD not make up my mind to see Julia begin such a career of folly, without doing something to turn her mind to a better way of thinking; and, by Maunma's advice, I went to her, the day before yesterday, at her breakfast hour of twelve o'clock, and found her a good deal discomposed by a quarrel with her maid: she was in her dressing-room, and I sat some time listening to her complaints before I touched upon the topic which brought me. Poor soul! a neglected education, and nothing morally bad, is at bottom; and she took in good part all I said. What good it may do it is difficult to say. While with her, I took a survey of the inconceivable taste which fills a fashionable woman's dressing-room with baubles. I asked Julia if she could tell me all the

things which filled her tables, for there were four set out.—“ No, Lucy ; how should I ? but suppose there is nothing there which Fanchet has not use for.” — “ Really, then, I will count them : give me pen and ink and paper.” — “ You provoking girl, who cares.” — “ I care, Julia, and I think you will too, when I read over my list.” — “ Well then begin, you shall count and I shall write.” — “ First, — Combs of all the various kinds, 36. Brushes for the hair, set in mother-of-pearl, some with gold, others silver, 24. Tooth-brushes, some plain, others set equally expensively, 18. A complete set of toilette silver establishment, perhaps of value £400. Of essences, in separate cases, 6 dozen varieties. Creams of every flower and perfume, in French china, each embellished with paintings, 50. Rose, elder, violet oils, and sweet waters, 6 dozen, for brushing and cleaning hair. Scissars, in gold, mother-of-pearl, and for common use, 25 pairs. Knives, set in the same materials, 12. Thimbles, French watches, boxes for every purpose, and such baubles, 36. Work-bags and ridicules, with filigree baskets, 20. Jewel-boxes, and other unexamined red

cases, 12." I really could go on no longer; but much of this display is left untold. I did this, Jane, because she allows her maid and trades-people to ruin her; and I wished to prove to her, she had accumulated an over-quantity of every absurd thing, beyond what could possibly be useful to any human being. Adieu.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER LXVII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, May.

THE commission you gave me to lay out a hundred guineas for you on books, my dear Jane, is somewhat difficult. I think your uncle, when he made this present, ought to have added to the gift a list of those he wished, since my most studious friend did not do it for herself: however, I do not quarrel with the omission, as it has given me a peep into all the book-scenery among the fashionables, either behind counters, or reclining in attitudes, in London. Whether to give the last part of that remark to the readers or the books, perhaps you may be at a loss; I know my meaning, if you do not, so there let it rest. I must put a few questions upon this commission, and tell you a few facts, before I proceed. Pray, then, do you want books or bindings? For I must tell you, woe to the age

we live in, that your money will go much further in the print that modestly shelters itself under paper, than where it shows a finer outside — perhaps a mixture. Or shall I send you one mighty tome of Eastern tales, costume, and scenery? When conversation flags, such a book, having first attracted notice from its splendid binding, gives a spur to dull time, and when open, your visitors may glean a fresh stock of ideas glowing under the torrid zone. If this does not suit, and I am to be grumbled at for want of a few of those lovely little volumes which toss about, and make confusion look classical, and some of a size large enough just to give play to the air of study which is so becoming and so like talent, (when the book rests on a fancy reading-desk,) then I must set to work quite in a different way. Some travels too, with maps; aye, and they must be extended full size, with a few pencil marks, (no matter where,) to prove how you have gone over the countries they refer to.

I should have advised poetry, but there is a sad gap made in “the trade” there; a circumstance I would have concealed from country

correspondents, as before their orders arrive it might be repaired, had not the present subject led to it, that Lord B.'s are not to be had; they were all erected lately into an altar, on which were offered

“ Three stiff collars, half a pair of gloves,

“ And all the trophies of her former loves.”

But whether there had been more sighs than three (the original number) breathed, or from want of skill in the priestess, I know not, but the whole altar, as well as offerings, was consumed. That is, I hope, but a temporary loss, not however to be repaired before Thursday next, when your commission is to be completed. I dare say I had best send a man from Gillac's to measure Julia's backs: the reading recess in her room is not large, and I know the backs alone cost a hundred guineas, and I can easily calculate what number of real volumes would fill the same space. Then shall you have the thing done in a good style; a few old authors from the stalls will come cheap, and they at least will have a well-used look, and the rest shall be all in contrast and gay attire. Joking apart;

though I fear I have left no paper to admit of the parting, you shall be well content with your purchase, if my taste and yours in reading agree as well as we do on other points.

Yours affectionately,

L. M.

LETTER LXVIII.

Lady Lucy M. to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, June.

I FORGET if I said my Highland friend, Helen, and her brother, who presented me with the eaglets, were come to town; he to carry home a bride with a handsome fortune, and she to assist at the ceremony. I shall be very happy to do what I can for her amusement. This is quite a gay season, and invitation cards of all sorts fly about: I enjoy it amazingly, only regretting your absence, and that Maria is not of an age to be presented yet. Frederick writes in his usual good spirits. Brother E. is very kind in going into public with me; and Mamma is so happy in our society, for I cannot lose my own share of that pleasure, that time flies on feathery wings; I believe I should say with feathery feet, if I did justice to the pretty lines where I take my comparison from; but,

my dear Jane, I am no composer, so you must take the colour of my mind as it happens to glance by you at the moment. I think those colours are gay in general; at least they ought to be so.

I was much amused last night, where perhaps no one else was, at a concert, which in itself was dull enough. I don't see why it should be so, but I generally detect more yawns over your *very* fine music, than upon any other occasion. My amusement arose from old General G., who sat by me and gave me such a good account of a Scotch tour he made last season, quite in a different direction from ours. Every thing to his old sarcastic eye takes a singular appearance; and it happened, he never had been in Scotland before. What a delicious contrast his tour and mine would make. He is really not ill-natured, but he has lived so long upon luxuries, both bodily and mental, that he is as ill prepared to find pleasure in a lower tone of society, as in a worse cooked dinner. This always makes me laugh, for it is one of the self-created miseries for which the wisdom of man has as yet found no cure; or I should rather say, will not apply

it when found. After an account of one "horrid day," when he found wet turf smoking his coffee at breakfast, and every thing most lamentable following that disaster, I gave him a sketch of one of my days, and he owned he did not think any thing so enjoyable could be found out of England. I either could boast of more philosophy in bearing ills, or met with fewer than he did, for we had nothing seriously to complain of.

Yours ever,

L. M.

I am going to Lady G.'s, where there are to be masks next week, and expect much amusement.

LETTER LXIX.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, June.

H. D. had the folly to take his stand in a door-way last night, near where Lady F. was, in the midst of a large party; she was in high spirits, and seemed the idol of the circle, when suddenly her eye caught his, and he darted such a look of reproach and fury at her, as seemed at once to go to her heart, and she dropt down quite insensible. No one but myself could guess the cause of this, and I was thankful to see he had disappeared after gratifying his disappointed feelings by this one look. I got her recovered and carried home, leaving a note for Lord F., who had been detained at the House of Lords, to beg him to follow, as I did not wish him to go up stairs. This is very vexing; Lady F. felt it, and wept bitterly. I so far re-assured her as to say, I was certain he

would quit England immediately; and I did hope she never would meet with any thing of the kind again.

I got a note this morning, bidding me adieu, and saying he should not revisit England till he had gained more self-command. The F.'s had not been above a fortnight in town. I certainly feel for her, but cannot be much surprised at such consequences.

Sir Henry is much attached to Lord F., and with me hopes at last to see him as much valued as he ought to be. I don't like the subject, dear Jane, and gladly turn from it. Helen was at the theatre last night with Mamma, and enjoyed it much. I shall show her all the sights, fashionable and unfashionable, as she may not often visit England. I wish, as I often do, for your assistance, and am sure you would like her. I saw your friends last night, Lady S. and Miss P., both much disappointed at your spring being spent so far from us. Adieu.

Ever yours,

L. M.

LETTER LXX.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, June.

Is there not in Cook's Voyages a description of a mask, who suddenly appears to give public chastisement to the offending wife, whose husband may suffer in secret, without having such power himself? In some such travels, dear Jane, I am sure you will find this gentleman; and I could have introduced him where he would not have been at all welcome, yesterday. Really, I don't know whether to be most angry at the young viscountess, or sorry for her husband. In vain, during dinner, I saw him try to give her some hint upon the impropriety of her conduct: she kept him quite on thorns. It is no matter who may sit beside her, with that person she is so exclusively occupied, she has eyes nor ears for no one else. When I say it is no matter who it is, I mean by that, it is

any one of her favourites; and, while engaged in these marked attentions, I saw her husband wretched, from a sense of her so exposing herself, and the dread of his feelings being the subject of observation to others.

How dreadfully a man must suffer when, day after day, he has the hard task of appearing easy and sociable under such disguised feelings at his own table. As I am, Lucy M., I may take the part of the husband, you know; and I do think things are not upon a good footing. Were I so treated as a husband, and found, when I selected an amiable looking female, all smiles and blushes, I had been misled into bringing home a bosom torment, I should not allow any false notions of refinement to hinder me from teaching the lady her duty; but, perhaps, he would do better to begin before-hand. Then do, dear Jane, suppose me a young, handsome lover of yours, with all the advantages which give me a claim to gain your hand, and I should propose my terms very plainly; but when first this scheme entered my mind, I looked about in vain for the old foundation to build it upon — obedience: it had been lost or

mis-laid; it could not be bought for money, and without it, I would not undertake to go on. At last I recollected that my great grandmother's repositories had not been opened since her death, and I flew to them. I found, of course, much old-fashioned stuff; but in a bright, highly polished heart, shut up, lay the object of my search; and when I touched a secret spring, it expanded into the full dimensions with which it ever adorned her breast; and so sterling had been the original value of the gem, it had contracted no rust by being so long forgotten.

This, then, I should present to my bride; and, with its attendant graces, she should be the most lovely, as well as happiest, wife in England — mine, and mine only, in every look, thought, and action; — one heart, one purse, one will. Nothing short of this would be my terms. In return, although the world might at first call me a tyrant, the smiling bloom which a heart at ease should send into my wife's countenance, would prove that the secret of domestic bliss had been discovered betwixt us; and many husbands, I am well assured, would envy

us the possession of it. There, Jane, is my idea; and, till you can give me a better, it will remain fixed as the regard of

Yours sincerely,

L. M.

LETTER LXXI.

Lady S. to Lady T.

Genoa, June, 18—

THE feelings you express, my dearest girl, on this unhappy business, are exactly such as I felt also. Though it is painful to dwell upon such depravity, yet it may be useful to look a little into the causes which may lead to it. Lady — came into the world young, handsome, and, I believe, much esteemed; and she filled her place as a wife and mother, we must suppose, to the satisfaction of those most interested. I never was in intimate habits with her, so I can form a guess only from appearances; and I also know one lady of the highest worth who esteemed her. Now, when seven short years only have passed, her name is consigned over to that list, from which an anxious mother must turn to her own children with the deepest interest in their future conduct. The first step a

married woman can take off the strict path of duty, is seeking general admiration. If her husband is vain of her appearance, in public particularly, I fear she may not long restrict her love of pleasing to him only; but if her principles are sound, she will soon feel her error; and the very moment she sees this has been the means of drawing forth the slightest feeling, however affectedly concealed, or still more affectedly *mingled with respect*, she will turn from that man humbled in her own eyes, and throw a guardian veil, by her manner, over those charms which could so far mislead him, as to induce forgetfulness of her solemn engagements; and, believe me, a woman need employ no weapon of defence but cold and dignified reserve. No man ever presumes so far, till he sees some slight symptoms of a woman slumbering over her own duty. A female character never can stand higher than when youth and loveliness are united with unsullied purity. Her husband cannot be always at her side, and on her own conduct she must, if she mixes much in the gay world, stand or fall. There is a common error among married women, which I

cannot too severely reprobate, — that of adopting friends among the other sex. You know, my dear daughter, I never soften terms, where right and wrong are in question; and I call this one of the leading features of a relaxed morality in the circle where you live; and whatever may be your opinion of it now, you will, when you have lived longer in the world, look back to the truth of my observation. I am deeper read in human nature than you can be; and I plainly tell you, there is not a man of your acquaintance I would select for your friend, your intimate every-day companion. The most upright man alive is subject to those passions which mislead the reason, and are more easily controlled in theory than practice. It is my positive injunction, that you restrict that degree of intimacy to a father, a brother, and your uncles. You may smile, and ask, “What you are to make of half a hundred cousins, and other intimates:” no one knows better than yourself how to adapt your manners, so as to be easy in society, and yet not familiar. My dear Mary, you have been always enough in the world to mark those shades; and remember, I admit no

one into the circle who may prove lounging observers of your every-day life, who lend books, write notes, and by such means are ever at hand to mark the slightest cloud that may overcast even as bright a lot as yours. Had such been the rule of conduct in many houses I could name, how much domestic peace might have remained unbroken !

You will not expect me to enter upon any other subject to-day. Your father continues to improve in health ; and we all like this place much. My best blessings attend you.

Your ever affectionate mother,

G. S.

LETTER LXXII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

June 15.

I AM engaged shopping with Helen, before her brother's marriage, and her return to that far-away world. She sat with me this morning in my dressing-room some time, and read me several passages out of her Scotch letters; and I was back there in a moment, and could not help feeling some envy at the full flow of enjoyment young people like ourselves, so shut out from the world, appeared to possess. Weeks and weeks roll over them without one change or variety from the world, so called by us. Jane, how should you like to spend a winter in Mull Morven, or at the foot of Glencoe?

It is not a thing I understand, how the spring of life is not blunted by living alone with nature so much: a *tête-a-tête* in summer, no one enjoys more than I do; but, if you will not

· tell my very distant Highland friends, I should prefer it on the mossy banks of Tay, rather than the rocky shores of the Atlantic. Yet; I say again, I admire the resources these girls find, which leave them happy and contented at the end of winter. Domestic society, no doubt, is sufficient for comfort; but it is not the only enjoyment of life. If I had time, I could nicely parcel out what portions of all the ingredients I would make up, to my own mind, drawn partly from the world, myself, and my family; but, fortunately for you, I have other things to say. I wish I had your taste in the little remembrances I am sending into Scotland with Helen.

You accuse me of saying nothing about Lady F——; indeed I am so little with her, I have nothing to say but what all the world can tell as well as I can do. I should feel it ungenerous to intrude too much upon her private life. Honour ties my tongue from imparting one word of what she might wish to know, and I should be sorry to make her feel humbled in my presence. I leave her to do her best, poor thing, quite satisfied that best must be as yet but

an irksome task, and my being with her would only make it more so.

Lord F—— seems very amiable, and I hope in time all may be as well in reality as it is in appearance. Her assemblies I go to, and I see her and Lord F. in public elsewhere, and that is all.

I can give you as little information upon the other subject you mention. I have no magic wand to oblige people to show me all their motives; and, at any rate, I think to scan any young friend so narrowly is hardly fair. My dear Jane, I apply the Golden Rule, and feel I should not like it myself. Sophy is a very pleasing girl, and though not so intimate with me as with you, I feel much interested in her.

I hope your uncle may bring you here before I leave town, as I promised Fanny to go to Essex next month. She appears to write as if every day had its full portion of enjoyment.

We go to Mrs. ——'s *déjeuné* on Thursday, and you shall hear if there is any novelty there. Adieu.

L. M.

LETTER LXXIII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Harley-street.

THE attraction last night of Lady F.'s assembly was our wild friend, the travelled Countess, in a circle of listeners, as usual, with her back to a pier-table, describing in full voice a thousand things, which no one would come to hear, were they not told by her. Her last tour was among the Greek islands, and her costume of last night was taken from them. Her light figure, and very elegant style, have altogether great charms to every-day people; but the same thing would send you or me to Bedlam, I think. And indeed with what grace she tells of these excursions, when a young sea-captain was her only *chaperon*, I don't know: this seems oddish even in modern days, yet no one makes the observation. I am sorry for her family, and

I understand she means to quit them soon to live abroad.

I saw, for the first time, last night, my aunt's favourite, young Lord Y——; I say young, as no one can fancy the old lord of that name. He appears to have travelled to good purpose; but I could not help one sly remark, that he seems to think there is merit in taking no share in society as it is. Now, unless he has brought some unknown recipe home for improving it, I fear he must take us as he finds us, and jog on as others have done before him. Perhaps it will suit him better to hermitize in his distant chateau, which I believe was locked up fifty years ago—literally locked up, I have heard, after dinner by his grandfather; and this young man intends to open it himself. I have begged a minute account of all the marvels he may discover; but he says he expects nothing at all out of the way. One of his sisters married lately; the other is a recluse. Do you know, Jane, we have fashionable devotees! Really it is so: young women of rank and good fashion retire from the world, and put on such sour looks, it would frighten me from church entirely, had I not my

Scotch friend's "ringing-in bell" still fresh in my mind; and I think I saw fully as much religion and cheerfulness mixed in due proportions in Scotland, as I ever saw (or never saw) elsewhere. But here, if you join these long faces, it is all over—adieu to social enjoyment or family comfort; as the moment one of a family takes a church of her own, submission to parents, and easy, affectionate intercourse with brothers and sisters, is all at an end. I do know one girl, who reckons the playhouse such contamination, that she will not sit ~~next~~ her brother, the morning after, at breakfast. When I set up for a reformer, I shall not starch up my robes of righteousness, but fold them gracefully, so that every ply shall take its proper place; and if there was a wanderer to be reclaimed among us, I should take that religion which is "gentle and easy to be entreated:" the cold frown of disapprobation should never cloud my brow; my heart might ache, but it should be covered by smiles, and I should win him back by rules, taken from our safest guide, and show him, that when the current of passion was subdued into a clearer channel, the errors which its turbulence hid

from his eyes, appeared in a very different light. I suppose I am not the only sister made to feel the gradations by which religion is effaced, from the school-boy tricks at prayers, to the college-wit upon a clerical character, and the infidel slinc left after two years spent upon the continent. Shall we not gently but earnestly labour, then, to bring back so dear a straggler to the fold. This has led me, my dear Jane, beyond what I intended.

Yours ever,
L. M.

LETTER LXXIV.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, Thursday, June

THERE is no well-enjoyed evening so difficult to describe as a ball, my dear Jane; yet, as you insist upon it, I must make the best I can of it. Our party had one costume, and my dress, sent by my aunt from Paris, supplied the pattern;—all roses, lace, and such *bal paré* style as you have often seen. Lady C. received the company in the two rooms which enter upon the ball-room, and the whole was done up in the best possible taste. Upon going in, the servants gave a ticket, to say, we were to sup as well as dance; a most comfortable piece of information. We had quadrilles, country-dances, and waltzing, all in turn; and really it was a delightful ball. But to go through the evening, I must carry you to the end of this dance, set you down to chat with your partner, just listen to some-

thing you call very impertinent, though you smile and nod back to him, as your hand is claimed by another, and *da capo* all the evening. I cannot run over all those I danced with — *mais point de rose sans epine*: these are the pleasures, then follow the pains. Just as I saw Lord Charles making his way to secure me for supper, my evil stars had led me to accept of a less tardy offer. He looks provoked, so do I: no help for it, to supper I must go. And to help the spleen, I saw Lord Charles take down Miss H., the great city heiress. Then I called to mind all the empty pockets in the west end of the town, into which I had seen a fortune made beyond Temple-bar slide, upon as short an acquaintance as this. Oh! I don't care, and I turn to see who is upon my other hand. I find Sir Jemmy Tandum, the darling of every perfumer's shop in Bond-street; flirt with him awhile; tire of that; and, you know, my own partner, of course, I was to punish with the sullens. But he laughed himself and me both so good-humouredly into spirits, that the supper proved much more agreeable than I deserved. After we came up stairs, I danced with young Lord

F. the second quadrille, and I was delighted to find who was looking on. You know it is extremely bad taste, dear Jane, to care who are the lookers-on; but that loses all its effect upon me when I hear P. L. praise my dancing; and so perfectly it restored me to myself, that when I next met Lord Charles, I begged him to remember wedding-cake for me when he returned from St. George's; which he promised to do.

Your friends, the Ladies P., looked very well. Indeed, I have no notion one can look ill at a ball, if it is as agreeable as I found this one; and the Morning Post was so obliging as to tell me next day, at breakfast, that I was much admired. That comes of course; and if the milliner has done her duty, you know, for the first few winters, you may be sure of being in the good graces of the Morning Post. Silly, indeed, would be the she, who rested her claims to popularity upon Mr. M. P.'s compliments: I know no good it does, but to set half-a-dozen idlers a-talking. "Did you think Lady Lucy looked well?"—"Oh! I hardly noticed her last night."—"Indeed! why the M. P. says she danced so and so, and looked divinely." It

may be so, but Lady Selina was my favourite partner, and she is not fashionable enough to be handed up to all the breakfast tables next Vanity, swallow that.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER LXXV.

Lady S. to her Sister.

Genoa, 18—

THE ceremony of taking the veil is over, my dear sister, and I must give you such an account as I can of it, leaving to the young people all the stage effect, of which so large a portion of all their religious ceremonies consist here. The girl I mentioned got me behind a pillar, so close to the rail, I could touch it; and within stood the lovely victim; but she is the victim only of her own feelings, as she is an orphan, and has an ample fortune entirely at her own disposal. She appeared about twenty-two; the paleness of exhausted feeling was strongly marked, and her whole air was to me tinged by a sort of stern despair: her dress was white, and simply clasped at the throat and waist: a transparent veil of white shaded, but did not hide, her figure, which might, even in this coun-

try, have served for a model of beauty. Her black hair was parted in front, and confined round her head in a Grecian style: the veil was fixed in the same manner at the top, and fell to her feet. Her hands were bare and beautiful: what of her skin was seen, also beautiful; her eyes full and black, and the rest of her face quite Grecian: her lips parted, as in silent prayer she knelt before me, beautifully. Except eyes, lips, and eye-brows, all was as colourless as a statue. Her devotion appeared intense; and when she rose to receive the veil, which was held extended by the heads of the convent, and the nuns prepared to remove the white one, she almost appeared to cease to breathe; her eyes turned, as if to cast one last look at some particular person, or part of the church, with an expression I shall never forget,—it was really supernatural. If any one was present who could read that look, it must have spoken volumes. Her hands were crossed over her bosom, and when the pealing anthem burst forth, which supposes the novice shrouded in that veil which parts her for ever from the world, she stood unmoved, till recalled by a slight motion

of those who held the veil, as if approaching her. She slowly removed her eyes from the spot they and her whole soul seemed fixed upon, and by a seemingly half-conscious bend forward, received the veil. From all the common accounts you have ever heard, you see much of the mumnery was left out : nothing could be more sublime and simple ; and when the anthem and prayers closed, she was led within a large door, which unfolds only upon such occasions, and closed immediately, admitting only the new-made nun and the heads. I could learn nothing more, than that after living three years in the world, she had come to a resolution to take the veil. One may form a guess, that she had placed her affections where they were not returned, or had lost the object of them. Adieu.

LETTER LXXVI.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Richmond, June, 18--

I ACCOMPANIED Mamma here upon a visit of a few days, and after the heat and dust of town, it is very agreeable. We spent one pleasant evening at the old Duchess's, where the assembly only differed from London in its rural character, — coloured lamps, music, and refreshments on the lawn, and such *al-fresco* devices. They have their inconveniences, which, I conclude, did not exist in the days when the Daphnes and Phillises kept all these scenes more exclusively to themselves; for Julia was alarmed almost to fainting by a frog; and her screams took me to see what was the matter. She was sitting upon a garden-chair, and close by sat froggy, looking most deliciously loving, under the glare of a yellow lamp, upon the top of a sugar-cake, which the servants had left in

a tray upon the grass. I wished that I had had your song of that gentleman's courtship; but "Heigh ho! said froggy" soon enough, as his death was doomed, and nothing could save him. The sly rogue had thought the cake would be his protection, I suppose; and so it nearly had, as livery Dick asked the *Maître d'Hotel*, "Sure, sir, the cake is not to be thrown in too?" And if he had been a frog of sense, he would not have waited the reply. Both, I suppose, found a watery grave in the Thames; unless, as I believe, frogs swim, which was not contemplated. We had scarcely recovered from this *fiat*, when that essence of sentimental folly laid hold of me — "All in such a flutter, and my poor head throbs so. Do, dear Lady Lucy, sit down with me; I will tell you as soon as I can, but you must promise to tell no one." Being perfectly acquainted with the usual style of her confidences, I listened in quiet expectation of exactly what I knew would follow. "Lord John was just on the point of making his proposals, and, you know, it would be so shocking to say *yes* at once. I said something, very low, of being resolved not to listen to him,

and held up my Woodstock ridicule to hide my face; when he rushed from me down that walk; and, — oh! save, save him, there's the fatal plunge:" and she sunk down, senseless, on the ground. Plunge there was too surely: three times I heard it before I could raise her and call for help. If my senses had not been bewildered by her folly, and this apparent coincidence, I might have recollected, that few lovers require more than one good and in-earnest plunge to drown their love. But no thought of that, and I flew as swift as lightning to the river, and there I certainly found Lord John washing his poodle: he had got a little boat, and gone out just far enough to give poodly the three dips prescribed by the highest medical advisers. Men, ropas, and lights, were now all vain; no lord was drowned; and so all slunk back, somewhat sulkily, thinking it was a trick of mine to laugh at them. I said to him, "How could you rush by Lady Eliza so?" "Rush! why, if I had not, Mitchickoff would have gained the water before I caught him, and Mitty has not sense to wash himself properly." This was so like one of his pranks, I could say

nothing more. — Jane, can you imagine what makes some women suppose that men are always going to make proposals of marriage? I should as soon think of our doing so to them. Well, let us see how that would answer, and proclaim it at Charing-Cross, just for a month. But, I dare say, we should be quite as difficult in fixing as they are. I might drop a courtesy to the best currie-whip in town, and beg to be taken in. But I should certainly put another coronet on it, and another man's horses to it; and then desire him to drive me not quite fifty miles, and be set down at quite a different door from what he expected; as it should by no means be his own. No man would be found possessed of all the requisites, if we had to select him for ourselves. This is very pleasant life, but not true country; not such, at least, as would be acknowledged on the banks of some Scotch rivers I know, or in the sylvan scenes of ———, or where mermaids ride the waves on dolphins' backs, as I saw them in summer. By the bye, I forgot to look if their bridles were like mine. Surely, Thistledown's silver-shells would be quite appropriate, and

in good taste, for a mermaid : and I dare say,
my pretty Thistle would let hers go as a pattern.
While the dust and heat prevent my riding,
how she stands paw, pawing in her stable, when
I go to see her. How I do love her.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER LXXVII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, June 30.

I MUST dispute the title by which you fix me down to give “ your particular interest,” in the Duchess’s assembly, a full and minute gratification. How can I, while you keep me ignorant from what that interest arose? We used to ask, Jane, you remember, is it vegetable, animal, or mineral? You are a spoiled child, and those who help to spoil you, suffer from it, as generally happens. I must try to overlook the buzz of this gay assembly, and distinguish the objects of most interest to others, in which way I may hit upon yours : I conclude it to be in the animated world. Of the vegetable, we had all the perfumes of Arabia ; and of the mineral, that elegant specimen, which fly in noisy compliments about the ladies from a gay earl’s pocket, called crackers : gunpowder you

will allow to be of the latter description. . The first who caught my attention, was the —, of —, whose graceful rowing on the Thames I had witnessed in the morning. Then passed in review, one who yields to no wheel of the four-in-hand club, and told me, in perfect delight, he had at last acquired the exact turn of the straw in the mouth, which gained the premium at their last meeting ; and he offered to teach it to brother E—— : “ For, my dear fellow, unless you can speak distinctly at the same time you turn your straw, you need not attempt to show yourself amongst us.” For some time, I could see nothing I thought you would care to hear of, till I got into a very attentive group, listening to the newly returned knight-errant, who has travelled so far, to rid the female world of all their bad taste in dress, manner, furniture, &c. &c. He was explaining his new code to his most attentive audience. Really, after putting us quite on the fret, by telling how much we are all in the wrong, (mere words won’t do,) he must give us coloured plates and explanations. My poor head was in such a puzzle, I told him I would put down my name to a five-

guinea subscription, for a proof impression of his work, if he would spare my brains for the present. Lady Fanny Twaddle told me, she had to pull her carriage-string, in St. James's Street, to listen to half an hour's lecture upon the wrong cut of her dog's ears, as he sat with his fore-paws upon the carriage-window : he is really very tiresome, and yet he does some good too. It has probably reached you, that we have got a golden image among us just now ; but whether finished for home-consumption or foreign exportation, I can't tell. Were it mine, it should be ground down at once into all sorts of elegant articles, after Rundell and Bridge's best fashion. Pray are any of these the objects of your curiosity, my dear Jane ? Or did it arise from the half-shut eyes with which his Grace looks at every thing, since he returned from his pilgrimage to St. Peter's, which is so attractive to many ; or the finished dancing of that all-perfect quadrillist Sir H. C.

I suppose you care little for a cold disdainful beauty, whose transient smile is bestowed upon so few. It never met my eye. 'But the Graces

themselves, soon to wear Hymen's most rosy chains, may interest you ; and the lovely band of cousins, who are just winnowing their newly stretched pinions in the air of an untried world, must attract your good wishes. I can think of no more, my dear Jane : you are too far removed from the trifles which gain birth to-day, and die to-morrow : and at any rate, nothing can at present expect so long a life as to reach Devonshire ; for town is too full and too gay to give continued attention to any thing.

Yours affectionately,

LUCY M.

LETTER LXXVIII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, June.

I RETURNED late this evening from Windsor, my dear Jane, where I went with some friends; and it was so lovely, I must tell you all about it, before the impression is gone off. As I had not been there since I was a child, it was quite new to me. The view from the round tower is very fine; but I was going to say to a lady next me, that I should like a few Scottish mountains, to give greater variety and interest to it, when a slight breeze raised that emblem of royalty, which marks the residence of our venerable Sovereign; and my conscience told me, all my decorations of scenery could not add a feature equal to that of real and heart-felt interest. We saw the new banners of the second Marlborough (which are to be placed yearly) they are putting up in the installation

hall: this, I believe, is the charter by which Strathfieldsay is held. I am not very well acquainted with those matters; but it seems an appropriate feudal due. The terrace has been closed for many years. After spending some time admiring the great park, we dined with a lady on its verge; and enjoyed, from her grounds, much variety of prospect. The castle stands most beautifully; and I am, indeed, more partial to looking at it, than from it, as it rises so proudly above the park scenery. What would my friends in Scotland give for a few of those trees? The Regent's cottage is very pretty, and must form a very agreeable contrast with his usual residences: I think it very handsome in H. R. H. to allow the public such free enjoyment of that part of the park. And I, for one, bow in gratitude for the refreshing boon, as it really was to-day: there had been some rain, and all was so verdant and so quiet. I did wonder what kept people here: that will be answered to-morrow at the ambassador's; for the tempter comes with all his usual arts, which are no where better displayed than at such a fête. I got one of his emblazoned cards,

which, I find, is a mark of peculiar distinction. It shall go, with all my other juvenile presents, to the Richmond children. Brother E—— is become a popular dancer, do you know : this is a trait of activity which I never expected to find in his character. He is still a “ very fine man,” but I hope to cure him. Adieu.

Yours ever.

L. M.

LETTER LXXIX.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

July 2.

I HAVE just a moment to-day to dress for the masked party, so attend my toilette: it is to be a ball-dress, of rather a splendid character; and a plaid of the brightest colours, clasped over one shoulder with diamonds, and a rich trimming to suit at the bottom of the dress, edged with silver; my hair as usual, and clustered up in a small coronet of gems. Helen takes the exact dress of Jeannie Deans, when introduced to the Queen; and her brother attends us. Mamma, Sir Henry, and brother E——, complete our party, and some stragglers will join us there; Lord H. in particular. I preferred a fancy Scottish dress to all the characters they proposed for me, from Flora, in Waverley, down to Peggy, in the Gentle Shep-

herd, as it is so difficult to keep up a character borrowed, — in its language particularly. I cannot spare you another minute.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER LXXX.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

July.

As a masquerade is as new to you, my dear Jane, as to me, I shall give you as much of it as I can recollect. Our party consisted of myself, in a Scottish dress, Jeannie Deans for my prompter, and her brother in a Highland shooting dress and very tasteful bonnet: this appeared our group, but Manma, and Sir Henry and Lord H. were close by us. After the first buzz, which is very confusing, I began to enter a little into it, and found a few yards of plaiding, with the diamonds which fastened it on, were sufficient to mark me as an object for all who were, or who wished to be, supposed for the evening under the banners of that country; and soon a gay youth, with the accent perfectly pure, came up with,

“ Dinna think, my bonnie lassie,

• I’m gaun to leave thee ;”

and really for some time provokingly kept

his word. A stranger, in the garb of Old Gaul, joined us, and said he had long been a wanderer from his native mountains, and begged that I would allow him to make me his guiding star homeward. The melody of his English tones, and the perfect simple elegance of his dress, were so unlike a mere Highlander, that I accepted his company, though I was satisfied he had never dwelt beyond the Tweed. But I could not make him out: however, he never left me. The first essay I made of my Scotch, was upon the young Lady D——, who, you know, married certainly for a jointure, and prompted by Jeannie I sung,

“ Donald, he is thrice as old as me,
 His days perhaps will no be mony,
 And if you ever may be free,
 You’ll surely then reward your Johnny.”

This was a little bold, as she had no mask; but when Mirth has slipt from her harness for the evening, no one minds that: besides, I never heard there was a Johnny in the case. Lord H. knew every one by instinct I think, and pointed out the very mother of the Graces, reclined under an alcove surrounded by flower-girls

I approached, and begged to gather from their baskets a banquet for her. She said, "None of her favourites grew in Scotland, and therefore I should not suit her taste."—"True, lady, we only boast the heath-bell, wild rose, eglantine, and broom; but we cull simples of great efficacy sometimes;" and searching one of the baskets, I brought out a few sprigs, and said, "These are of true Scottish growth: this is thyme, somewhat withered by being wreathed with rue, which our old songs say, remains long in prime, and having nothing better, I select it for you." A friar joined us, and begged to confess the fair-one for whom I prescribed rue, a plant which he said flourished in abundance within the shelter of their convent walls; but I warned him off, and bid him confess the lighter follies of the flower-girls, and leave my prescription to take its full effect. My attention was caught by my "stranger" in conversation with a sweet voice, who, with a sigh, said,

"Since 'tis a customary cross,
Let's teach our trial patience."

"Go, my love, and on the staff of hope find comfort and support," was part of his answer;

but before I could look round she had vanished. I soon discovered Julia in the character Titania, and

“ I did at my pleasure taunt her,
Till in mild terms she begged my patience.”

My mother took her in charge, to save the already half-closed eyes from the effects which Puck's mistakes might occasion. We drew near a group of Wellington heroes, whom I should have taken for mere Bond-street beaux, had my uncle not said they were describing the noble art of Rugriding, as practised in the Marlborough wars with so much tact: they must be real soldiers. Brother E. had joined friends of his own, and we lost him. A duchess, who had seemed somewhat impatient at the conversation of the officers, called our attention to an excellent tumbler, who, after many very good tricks, disappeared into the pocket of a lady of the seventeenth century. I did not find I could make as much use of my Scotch as I expected, though Jeannie was at my elbow: she was very popular, and many butlers offered to turn school-masters for her sake. She had a ready sweet mode of shaking off impertinence,

and answering wit in a sly droll Scottish tone, that delighted every one she spoke to.

We had a capital character, and, I am told, quite new — a Tulip, who, under that gaudy guise, displayed every folly incident to human nature: the only other vegetable was a Thistle, which was rather troublesome to me, but

“ I turned my weeding hook aside,
And spared the symbol dear.”

A harper caught my attention, and sung most beautifully upon a rose:

“ When at the early glance of morn
It sleeps upon its glittering thorn,
’Tis sweet to dare the tangled fence,
To cull the timid floweret thence,
And wipe with tender hand away
The tear that on its blushes stray.”

I knew the subject this applied to, and taking the harp, and running over it enough to change the measure, answered him thus:

“ Hope soon will waft you brighter hours
On wings of plumage soft and gay,
The wreath you twine of blooming flowers
Shall then cast thorns and tears away.”

We had some very good groups : a Spanish nobleman, disguised as a peer from Brae Mar ; the Queen of Shadows herself, attended by the essence of taste and perfumes, who rules the fashionable youth of this age with undisputed sway ; a once-married, once-parted, once-widowed, and to-be-married-again lord, in the disguise of a Highland keeper, with such brogues as I had seen there, though hardly expected to meet again : a courtier and a statesman driving the great wheel of political affairs each their own way, was very amusing ; and we had a lady directing a ball acted to the life—exclusion and selection, with all the presiding qualities, were done to perfection, and more truly laughable than any thing I saw during the evening. I pass over all the rest, to reach the most singular and well-sustained character, which I heard many people say they had ever witnessed. One very clever person undertook to be London itself ; his head was surmounted by the dome of St. Paul's, and the great mantle in which he was wrapt, by extreme dexterity, was so managed as to show the scene where the action of the moment lay. This idea must have been taken

from some vision I have met with, where the mantle was painted after the same style. He begun by St. Paul's, then the Tower, next a city feast and the Lord Mayor, which was done with great wit. This was followed by a view of the India House and the Temple; and I heard it said he spoke excellent law. Next he was a bargeman on the Thames, with a song; then a Jew; and I believe he gave a more exact display of their proceedings than might be agreeable to all the by-standers. He gave us Bedlam after this, and pulling off his mask, showed a countenance no one could recognise — of ashy paleness; and such eyes, I believe I shall never forget them: this was too well done, and seemed to exhaust him. He retired for some time to refresh himself, and when I saw him again he was exhibiting the Lottery-offices: from this he ran over the Union Service Club, the Gaming-houses in St. James's Street, the Opera House, Theatres, Four-in-hand Club, Parks, Argyle Rooms, and some distinguished characters there, the House of Commons, and concluded with the Hustings at Westminster, where he appeared so perfectly at home, that no one

any longer doubted to whose versatile talents they were indebted for this arduous and amusing character.

I dare say, my dear Jane, I have, even on paper, wearied you. One word of my stranger : I begged him to raise his mask. "Not for worlds," he said ; and though he had "played the truant with time" on his own account, he gave me to understand he was my guardian for the sake of a friend. Provoking, but most pleasant creature ! how I long to find him out. Thus we parted. Adieu.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER LXXXI.

Lady Lucy to Judy Jane.

Harley-street, July.

MAMMA carried Jeannie and me to an exhibition of painting, in a private house, to-day, where we were fortunate enough to see P. L.; and her warm Scotch heart was quite delighted. The fine line of thoughtfulness, so strongly marked in his countenance, was, at times, so enlivened by interest in the subject of the canvass before him, that she saw more character than she could have traced, in so short a time, otherwise; and she combined in her own fancy, such a mixture of goodness and elevated feelings, as will, I think, if rightly distributed over her quarter of Scotland, fairly rival "Charlie my darling" To those who live at a distance from the busy world, there is an inexpressible charm, in thus unexpectedly finding themselves in society with one for whom so much is felt

and of whom so much has been heard. She absolutely gazed with a tremor of delight upon him; and when I whispered "How can you look at any man so?" she dropt her eyes with such a blush of innocent surprise, at being caught, and turned to me: "I look at him as something beyond man: none at least could excite the emotion he does."—"Fye, fye, Jeannie, is there no Malcolm to chide that blush and lingering gaze?" Poor Jeannie! as she looked her last probably, I could find no more fault; and when he made one of his graceful half-bend half-bows, on finding all the company stand up, as he passed us I thought Jeannie's heart would have leapt from her eyes. It is really pleasant to have had it in our power to make her trip South so agreeable to her. You asked me what sort of books my friend Jeannie has. She is truly Scotch; all fair hair, blue eyes, and expression, with a fine skin, and high colour; but it is a colour that varies so much with the feeling of the moment, it gives great interest to her countenance. Her figure shows health and vigour more than grace; at least the sort of quadrilling swimming grace, such as

you and Lady Anne boast, my dear Jane, but which, I imagine, would stand Jeannie in little stead in that country, where active exertion is much oftener the lot of females, than languid leisure to study the graces. One glance to smooth her snood at her mirror will suffice Jeannie in four-and-twenty hours, I dare say. She slyly asked Mamma, when she insisted upon her carrying down one of those large straw bonnets, if she meant it to scuttle the water out of her brother's boat, for it could otherwise be of no use to her.

The T.'s are going abroad this summer, bantling and all. Lord T. is really a pattern husband, and she seems to think so too: I mean Lady T. by she. As to your fancy for my sending you fashions, you must give it up, my dear Jane; I could not resist making a fright of you. I would select every thing hidcous I could find; and you should be made the rarest caricature of a belle of the nineteenth century that ever Devonshire saw. No one talks of fashions but milliners and ladies' maids. I heard Julia's give a lecture upon them t'other morning, the English of which was, to induce

her lady to throw aside all she wore during the last two months, for her benefit; and to run a few more long bills for her coadjutor's benefit, the dress-maker. I am positive that they bribe the maids who preside, not wait, at toilettes, to disgust their ladies on purpose. It would be my rule, if I had a maid who presumed to give her opinion, to do exactly the reverse of her advice; at least where its object was fresh orders. They are a detestable set, and many a gay and fashionable woman is brought into serious extravagance by their influence; and, like all other secret influence, so much art is mingled, they are blinded entirely to the snare. Adieu.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER LXXXII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Harley-street, July 27.

I HOPE my Scotch friend goes home pleased with all she has seen. She has cried her eyes out at O'Neill, laughed at Mathews, and blushed "for very shame" at our opera-dancers. I don't see, Jane, why this should be thought so truly Scotch, and praised in my friend Jeannie as an interesting trait of feeling; while we should be laughed at heartily, and called affected for it. Now I confess I never look at these dancers without wishing myself any where else: but who would venture to say so?

I prevailed upon Mamma to send out cards for a ball; and though late in the season, it was a very good one: but I imagine not such as Jeannie would have preferred to her own: but it was seeing a little of every thing. The only novelty was a fancy of brother E.'s. after sup-

per; for we supped à l'*Ecossais* : he had seen it done at Naples, instead of the common ball-supper fancies, to supply conversation for those who have it not at hand already: it is having two vases; and every one writes on a slip of paper, and rolls it up; and the gentlemen deposit in one, the ladies in another; they are then shook together, and carried round, and each gentleman presents the lady from his vase, and she from hers, what they draw out, and all sorts of absurd things follow of course. Slips of paper and pencils were provided, some most stupid, others very *a-propos*; and being all written for the moment, good taste and feeling preclude any thing unpleasant: you are not obliged to read aloud, unless you like it; but most people did. My roll, it would have puzzled me to read:—

“ The music of that voice I heard,
 Nor wist while it enslav'd me,
 I saw those eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
 Till fears no more had saved me.”

That they were not all written for the moment this proved, as it was in *ink*: but I suppose it

is a possible case to substitute a different roll from what you draw; but, "Presented by whom, Lucy?" By the "stranger" of the former evening. I do not take off his mask for you, Jane, yet. You remark, and I am to understand, he acts by deputy at present.

Monday, July 30.

My friends are returned home, and, I hope, carry favourable impressions. Jeannie enjoys every thing best in her own way, not at all in mine, for she is so hampered by — "But, Lady L., how will this and that and t'other appear if I do it?" or, "I cannot help thinking it will seem odd;" or, "indeed you must excuse me, that will never do." I tell her she draws her plaid over her eyes, as I saw some old women do, from devotion in church, when in Scotland; and finds merit in what I see none; sifting every particle and circumstance of life so minutely, that it must run away before she makes up her mind upon enjoying it. I treat the world as my garden, and walk strait on upon a terrace high enough to give me a full view; and when I pluck bright

flowers from the borders as I pass along, I don't throw them away because a few weeds stick to them.

I forgot to write of the breakfast party; it was but so, so, hot and dusty: and perhaps I am not so easily pleased in rural villa scenery, since I became aware of the "mimic form" it presents.

Sir Henry and my brother go home with Manma. I go down into the country in a few days, to see Fanny; and so ends my London campaign.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER LXXXIII.

Lady S. to the Countess of E.

Florence, July.

MY DEAR SISTER,

YOU may believe that the prospect of having my daughter, my grand-child, and son-in-law, with us, is a most unspeakable pleasure: next month we hope all to meet. This is a very pleasant place, and I have made myself very well acquainted with all that is best worth seeing. Although the gallery is stript of much of its original beauty, yet I am happy to find a prospect of it being restored; and much is still left to delight the eye. The situation, gardens, &c. &c. do not please me quite so much as Naples; but the latter had novelty to recommend them. I met with your old friend Winifred here, and her fine stiff husband. She is more delightful than ever; so much taste, and so perfect a knowledge of every subject

which she finds, in painting or in marble, quotations by the yard, notes, remarks “from her own pen,” and all the parade of female learning: her husband happily thinks her an oracle, and takes every thing on trust if it comes from her. They say marriages are made in heaven, but if the wind is high, often blown asunder before they are concluded on earth. It must have been a calm, calm day, when these two were paired; for they could not have been matched otherwise, I am sure. She will be a real nut for Lady Lucy to crack at leisure, for six months after she returns to England.

Adieu, my dear sister. With our united good wishes,

Believe me ever

Your attached

G. S.

LETTER LXXXIV.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Park, Essex, July, 18—

A FULL account of Fanny I promised, her husband, house, and every thing. Such a promise! I found her waiting me upon the lawn with her husband, and the joy of her sweet countenance at once told me all I wished to know,—that she was perfectly happy. Mr. B. welcomed me in a hearty, kind way, and they hardly allowed me to glance at the fine timber, deer, and other parkish beauties, before I was hurried to the house. Every thing is upon the most elegant plan of comfort you can imagine; just servants enough, rooms enough, and every thing enough. Mr. B. took us through the library to Fanny's own drawing-room, and there left us. "See," said she, "what a room!" And certainly such a room I should like to see of my

own: it opens upon a flower-garden, where a marble basin receives a fountain playing, and at that time sparkling, over a wilderness of sweets: it does not spout from a dolphin, but rises from an invisible pipe, and falls in a shower of spray, such as I have seen natural in Scotland. Orange blossom, jessamines, and all Flora's treasures, were lavished here. Mr. B. could not resist the pleasure he anticipated upon this exhibition, and we found him on the out-skirts of the garden, watching with extreme delight all his Fanny's raptures. She brought him in with, "Oh! you spy, what will Lady Lucy say?" — "She will say, dear Fanny, that she made me a happier man than at one time she had reason to think I deserved to be." The house and grounds are in excellent taste, and Fanny drove me all round her paradise with a pair of pretty bay ponies. I suppose Mr. B. had not many tastes similar to hers formerly; but she has a winning way of arranging every thing, so as to give it merit in his eyes; and she plays at some *tête-a-tête* game every evening with him. They have a good neighbourhood; and Mr. B.'s wealth seems, from what I heard

in my rambles, to “cheer all the country round.”

I should like to find a plain, brown-coated man, I think, by and bye, myself, dearest Jane. Do you know, I am really growing serious since I came here. Joking apart, neither you nor I could have made him happy; but Fanny can and will, I am charmed to see. I shall remain a fortnight. E. accompanied my mother home, and what else we may do this summer, is not yet determined. Adieu.

Yours ever,

L. M.

LETTER LXXXV.

*Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.*Park, July, 18th

MY DEAR JANE,

E. CAME to carry me home two days ago, as Mamma, Sir Henry, and E., have accepted an invitation from Lord and Lady F. to go into Wales; and we all go there after I have been a week at home. Will it prove another Scotland? You know their fine place is on the coast, and I am extremely glad to see it.

We have had some very pleasant society here, and it gives me much pleasure to see that Mr. B. seems to have gained so good a footing: Fanny is adored. E. was quite astonished when he saw her. "Is that Lady H.'s daughter, and that her husband?" This arose from Lady H. having said her daughter was married horribly; but the wretch had money, only Fanny did not know how to use it. I am very glad

that E. has been their *ménage*, since this was the impression given. Adieu.

Ever yours,

L. M.

To live a month with Lady F., rather makes me feel odd. Sir Henry heard lately from H. D., seemingly more composed.

LETTER LXXXVI.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, Wales.

WE are charmed with this place ; it has every advantage from sea views and woodland heights, rocky stónes, and so forth. The castle is partly modern, but there are battlements and turrets, and all the decorations of castellated architecture. You might be shut up in a tower, or a dungeon, dear Jane, or suspended from an iron hook, near the portcullis, at pleasure, any height you incline, with perfect ease. My ideas of a Highland baron were paltry, compared to the terrific power they swayed here : but, I suppose, you will prefer the carpet tales, either of other or present days, to these images, which, had time not softened them down, would be somewhat oddish to our feelings. I found Lady F. looking well, and all the party in summer gaiety ; it is a large one, but I shall name only those I have any

fancy to, at present ; and for that I take names of the country, as I found in Scotland last year it led to something unpleasant my having *named* too fully. Sir Edward and Lady Mortimer, with their daughter Isabella, stand foremost with me ; an old Welsh family. I hear that Isabella has ten brothers and sisters, and she is the third ; her elder brothers being out with the army or navy. She is eighteen, and a really engaging girl : her mother is a charming woman ; and I guess they are a united, happy family. Sir E. was known to my uncle formerly. We ride and spend the mornings as we like, and sit down, I believe, most days, five-and-twenty to dinner ; and the evenings bring music, dancing, chat, and every agreeable circumstance of society. Lady F. being new, all the families within reach wait upon her ; and she has manners well calculated to please. I see her husband much delighted by the constant attention she pays to her visitors ; and she does it with such graceful ease, they feel, but do not see, it. I must notice one circumstance, I think, greatly to her praise : in selecting her own apartments, she declined all those looking towards the sea.

I testified my perfect approbation of her choice, midst all the objections made, that one window was dull, another too sunny, and such hints from friends, *at her want of taste.*

I do not expect to have much time for my pen; do not you either, my dear Jane; and if I can be better than my word, you will reap the benefit, in so far as you flatter me by saying your correspondence with me is your only present link to society.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER LXXXVII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, Wales, August.

LADY Mortimer having mentioned a very amiable recluse was here, Lady F. resolved to introduce herself, as it was a case less of etiquette than kindness, and Lady M.'s account of her was so interesting. The outline of her story was soon told; young, rich, and amiable, admired in the world, married and happy — then widowed by the fiery bound of a favourite horse, which laid her husband in his grave, she was left at twenty-two with two sons, one born after his father's death. When it was found that time did not do its usual part, her friends in vain tried to draw her from her retirement, and after some years gave her up to her own solitary schemes, hoping she might at last return to the world without solicitation. In this they were disappointed, and after ten years, her habits

appear only to have taken deeper root, and the "stubborn sickness of the heart" remains the same. "O! is she handsome!" exclaimed that pert girl, Miss Emma; "it is so long since any one asked that question, I dare say you could hardly find it answered." Lady Mortimer said, "she would at any rate have no charms for you."

We drove there Ladies F. and M., Isabella, and myself, yesterday, after Lady M. had written a few lines to ask Lady Olivia's permission; which was immediately granted, for her feelings are too deeply seated to be at all *farouche*. Her castle, for it is one of the oldest upon this coast, had a cold, stern look, which, added to a bare rock-bound coast, seemed destined by nature to banish all feelings agreeable to life; yet here, Lady M. says, she was once a happy wife. I had worked up my mind to expect a display of sombre magnificence, but I found things rather bearing the marks of faded modern life, such as I suppose when hers was in its prime was the taste. She received us without any forbidding gloom, though she struggled to suppress the sigh which, alluding to Lady F. being a young wife and lately coming into the neighbourhood,

occasioned; it would not do, and after holding her hand for a moment, she turned from us into a deep recess, where three windows formed a sort of inner room: this was soon conquered, and she returned perfectly calm; and while she conversed with these ladies, and Isabella talked with her sons, who were home from school, I had time to observe her appearance. She has very fine features, and a sort of clear skin, which I never saw but once I think, of the brunette complexion, a slight tinge of colour, and a full dark eye: lack lusted eye of course. Affliction appeared to have drained her countenance of colours, and left an autumn tinge, such as a sickly sun only at times lightens up: very black hair, shaded off her forehead. Nothing in the character of her dress particular, but its colour you need not doubt. Her two sons appear delightful boys, and the full tones of their voices were a strong contrast to their mother's appearance. I have not time to-day to say more of her, but I dare say we shall know her better before we leave this. I rather wish to vent a little of my spleen at the following conversation after we returned to the castle. "Oh! do tell us about this

interesting creature," echoed from men and women all round us. — "Quite a heroine of constancy," drawled out lord B. : "pity as she is so rich she won't marry." — "Marry! oh, you shocking creature, she cares for nothing but the screaming of the sea-birds round her broken battlements : but do let us hear." There was so little for such ears, that we were all rather silent, when one I need not name, as you will find her out by her speech, said, "Oh! you need say no more, give me a pen and I will put it all down : the lovely recluse clasped Lady F. to her bosom, swore eternal friendship, wept o'er the ghost of departed joys, gazed and wept again ; while Lady F. in all the brilliancy of life, shone such a delicious contrast! such feeling, such sympathy, in a young Countess! I do think, Lady F., we must take your picture so, light and shade could not have been more beautifully grouped for effect." A burst from E. and his fashionable friends followed this cold-hearted wit, while I saw "the prisoned secret" in the eye of Lady F., which proved her sympathy arose from any thing but a love of effect.

I left them to enjoy their own applause, and begged Lady F. to send for the new music I saw in her dressing-room, as a relief to her as well as myself.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, August 20th.

You forget, my dear Jane, when you command me so imperiously to write, "as I did from Scotland," that I was a traveller there, and my writing-case lay, the only object of interest, on the bare table of an inn; here, it scarce peeps from beneath the many circumstances of daily interest which are heaped over it: however, as I am to be a traveller soon, you shall hear of all the beauties that fall in my way as I go along. Our evening society is greatly increased, if not improved, this week; and I was a little inclined to cast a withering look at a lady last night who attempted to revive the stale joke of quizzing the natives: but when I found she was one of themselves, and had only spent one year in town from her native city, Shrewsbury, I left her to the contempt of her countrymen. I

cannot so slightly treat another, who does belong to our circle, and by her music and other showy talents is playing but a wicked part towards her we used to call Medora, as I see her daily arts practised against the husband; and, like Gulnare, she is very willing to send "his last virtue to join the rest:" and she is young, my dear Jane, and unmarried, who is so employed. I mean to set Sir Henry, with his sarcastic flattery, to work upon this young lady. We are to have a fancy ball, and the Welsh ladies are in great expectation, as it is quite new here: those who choose come in mask, upon giving in their names to Lord F.; and as all are to unmask at supper, no harm can ensue. If you can suspect any improper person to be found among these wildernesses, I prefer being unmasked; for I found having any thing of a character requires so much attention to keep it up, one loses a great deal of amusement. During these very hot mornings we have sat chiefly in a circular saloon, looking over the sea-terrace, and Sir Henry reads to us: the *us*, means ladies resident, Mamma, Lady M., and so on. This is very pleasant, and we employ

ourselves after the most approved manner of spinsters and discreet matrons during "the readings." Mrs. Siddons, I have heard, first introduced what I think so awkward an expression. As we go next month into the very country of Owen Glendower, he read Henry the Fourth this morning, to let us recall what Shakspeare says of Welsh character: furious creatures they must have been. I am glad the race is extinct. I see some of the party tire of this, and would prefer a volume of Lord Byron, so I dare say our audience will fall off.

I like Isabella better than all the girls here, she has so much intelligence and so little folly, and beautiful as heart can wish:—not in the common idea; (but who thinks alike?) for it is the beauty of mind and expression, with a form and face much such as pass (without this animation) unnoticed every day. Her talents appear equal to any, but are never exerted in display; and her father dotes upon her, I see. She never was in town: would not you like to have her with you the first time? Adieu.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, Wales.

ISABELLA and I set out by ourselves to-day to visit a family, of whose industry and poverty we had heard a great deal from a lady of this neighbourhood. The cottage was placed absolutely in a cleft of the rocks which overhang the sea, about half a mile from here, and we got up to it upon shelving natural steps, of a beautiful blue clean rock, resembling marble. Isabella has so good a manner with the country people, she introduced herself and me quite easily. We found the dame spinning, and three or four little ones, each performing some household task. Poverty there was, no doubt; but of that perfectly cheerful, active kind, that must always create respect. She was dressed as neatly, though in the coarsest materials, as it was possible; and the children were so also. I

gained from her all the particulars of her situation and means of life. Her husband is not a fisherman, as I supposed, but a sort of boat carpenter, or cobbler. She has ten children: her eldest son is in the army, and abroad; her second in the navy, and with a suppressed sigh she said they had not heard of him for three years, but in God's good time they hoped he would return. Her eldest daughter (and a mother's pride brightened up her eye as she named her) is in very good service with a farmer; her second works at home, and five more are too young for work; and, pointing to a sleeping cherub, "my youngest is on the breast."

Margery, who is at service, comes home once a month, and gives her ten shillings of her wages, and always takes home clothes to mend, and little matters, "which lighten my drudgery," she said; "and her mistress is so good as to allow her to work an hour at an odd time for her brothers and sisters." The father does not earn a steady subsistence, but through the year may make from ten to twelve pounds; and the second girl sometimes gains a trifle by carrying fish to gentlemen's houses for the fishermen.—

in all of money, I could hardly reckon twenty pounds. "But, good woman, how can you maintain a family upon that?" "Ladies, I will tell you how we live: we buy of course very little. When James, the eldest, was last at home, he gave us a cow, and our neighbour Dickens allows her to feed off his downs: twice a year I purchase a coarse sort of grain from a mill near here, which, when ground down, I mix with potatoes and make a cake: not a bad one, ladies, if you will taste it." She handed us out of a neat, flat piece of matting, a very tolerable cake. "This with milk serves for breakfast, and I make a few cheeses, which come in at dinner, at least for my husband." — "But has he nothing to drink?" "Not often; though after very hard work I give him a bottle of beer, for I always keep one dozen, and I get it at two-pence a bottle, for him only; at other times, whey from my cheese, or milk, is all we drink: — potatoes, and sometimes our neighbours give us fish; I dry them, and my husband can cast a line from that rock you see from the windows." — "Have you no tea?" "No, ladies; husband brings in a little for me when a-bed with a baby, but I

would not indulge so at any other time." The evening repast was much the same. I promised to get her a receipt for Scotch porridge, which I assured her fed many thousands, where they had little else to depend upon. Meat, I found, they never tasted, yet more healthy, fine children could not be seen. They have a little garden, but, except potatoes, I suppose it yields small assistance.

The cleanliness of every thing quite astonished me: two rooms and a closet contained seven children, and their parents. I asked how she educated them. She said Lord F. had a free-school, where they were very well taught, and three of them in turn read very distinctly. I could not help saying, "Surely, if Lady F. knew your situation, she would assist you." "Oh! no, Ma'am, except in sickness, we never ask help." I don't believe this woman is five-and-thirty: she spins for blankets and coarse cloth, which is woven near home, and makes her husband's dress. The wool she gets very reasonable, and she and her daughter work at harvest in return for other little advantages her good character gains her.* We left her with

great admiration, and mean to get something done for her children which shall not give offence to her good feelings upon the subject. The lady who named her to us, says she appears regularly at church with her children, and is in all parts of character equally respectable.

My dear Jane, I think we may draw a good lesson from such a picture, when we place it in contrast with the fancied evils of life, amidst abundance, which we too often see. Adieu.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER XC..

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, Wales, August.

I HAD been so much pleased with the situation of the parish-church when there upon Sunday, that I returned to see it in my walk to-day, with Isabella Mortimer. It stands upon a little height above the sea, and the cemetery is continued down to a low wall, which parts it from the shore: the stones in general are nearly sunk on the sloping side, and I conclude they had begun to bury up towards the church, at least as it now stands. It is very old and quite simple, though Gothic. No situation could have been better chosen; *isolé*, and sufficiently above the sea to be protected from its encroachments. I seated myself upon one of those tomb-stones, such as I saw in Scotland, broad and flat, supported at each end about two feet from the ground: this one was of marble from

Anglesey, and new. The shore is perfectly smooth, and unbroken by any rock, in this bay; and the full swell of each wave falls upon the ear with a solemn regular stillness, I may say, that particularly suits the scene. Nothing distracts the attention; and all is sea and horizon: a distant sail, a few wild fowl on wing, and Isabella's light figure picking shells, were the only other objects; and the bay is closed in by low points, that just appear above the water. I felt the full effect of this combination in a church-yard; and turning naturally to trace the inscription upon the marble where I sat, they were lines dictated so truly from the heart, that I took them down with my pencil:—

Forgive the wish that would have kept thee here,
 And oh! forgive the anguish-dropping tear,
 While memory clings to that bright eye,
 Beaming through life in tender sympathy,
 And turns in sickening sorrow from the tomb,
 Whose silence seal'd thine earthly doom.

It was, I learnt also from the stone, the grave of a naval officer.

Many inscriptions were in Welsh, but English is now the general language, of those at least who are eloquent, either in tears or smiles.

We are soon to go into North Wales: the party will consist of my brother and uncle, Lady Mortimer, Isabella, and myself; and we are to have curricles only, that can drive any where. I expect much pleasure from this tour.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER XCI.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, Wales, August 30.

I MAY perhaps have told you, my dear Jane, or your penetration may have discovered, that I think E—— very much spoiled by foreign feelings: I say feelings, because his are now modelled by ideas gained abroad. To give you an instance; I heard him a few days ago, talking with some of the idlers of fashion here of Isabella Mortimer. “Ah! well enough to represent at a ball during the assizes at Shrewsbury. But where is the grace of Lady J., the sprightly wit of Miss C., and the dignity of the all-divine Dulsibella?” You know well who she is. In short, E. added, “she would not show at all in town.” I determined to make a change of tone in Isabella’s favour, and assembling Lady F. and Lady M. in my council of state, I begged to have Isabella left to me

for the evening; and having the command of Lady F.'s wardrobe, I dressed her as a Turkish bride, bound up all her beautiful hair in a blush and silver turban, and put a bandilet of diamonds over her forehead, not a tress allowed to stray from its confinement. This is very trying, I know, but she stood it enchantingly: her fine eye-brows appeared to great advantage. Her robe was of silver gauze, and fell in folds over the bosom; and I encircled her waist with a rich girdle of gems, a beautiful antique belonging to the F. family: the robe only reached her knees, and was bound with silver. Beneath she wore a white satin petticoat, and it also was edged with a deep border of silver. Her sandals were laced over with silver cord, and clasped with diamonds; her lovely arms were bare, and her sleeves looped up with jewels: I twisted one string of pearls and diamonds round her right arm, but left the other as nature made it, which indeed proved her power of ornamenting to be superior to mine. Her father startled at her appearance, and the great change I had made began to withdraw the consent he had given to my plan; but paternal pleasure in the

lovely Turk's brilliant appearance, gained, from the weak side, the sanction I desired. I knew E.'s costume, and had before taught Isabella a foreign dance, which he excels in, and had not seen danced since he came home; and as she was to speak no known language, I flattered myself all was safe, he never having seen her dance but a common quadrille, or heard her sing any thing except a Welsh air. I gave up my plan of taking no character, and wrapped myself in a brown mantle, and with a dervise's cap and long beard, kept near my Turk, in case of any dilemma. We allowed the room to fill before we entered, and reached Lady F.'s harp before any notice was taken. Some one sat down, and begged her to sing, and she warbled forth such "dulcet tones," as soon brought my *protégé* into notice. E. directly asked her to dance; and she went through all the varieties of the figure I had taught her with such an air of finished talent, as greatly assisted the deception. Being without a mask, settled the point as to her being an entire stranger; and I soon found she did not require any aid from me. I changed my own appearance into a Welsh fortune-teller,

and to those of whom I knew not enough to say any thing very *a-propos*, I chattered such gibberish as suits all. Before supper I put on a common ball-dress, and was delighted with the success of my plan. Still Isabella was undiscovered, and by graceful dumb show, so engaged my brother's attention, he never left her side. After supper he intreated me to prevail upon her to speak to him. I said she was spell-bound by her turban; but if she would allow me to remove it, her speech would return: he gallantly bent one knee to the ground to solicit this favour; and when she stooped to raise him, I contrived to loosen her head-dress, and the fall of her luxuriant hair, was the first intimation his astonished senses received, that he had passed the evening gazing in admiration on Isabella Mortimer; and I could read in his countenance that he thought the Earl of E.'s coronet might show in London extremely well, if graced by such a head. I buckled up her hair by the diamonds only, and she appeared in the ball room with E., where the tide of fashion rolled to her feet. These men, how I despised them! She became the envied partner

of all those who had so slightly estimated the modest blush of youthful feelings, when unadorned by the trappings of fashion. But I have, I hope, reclaimed E. from his ideas; and I believe he was the more confirmed by her manners at breakfast, when, addressed in the full strain of compliment, natural, I do believe, to their surprise she withdrew from the attentions paid her, with the delicacy of a mind which, in contributing her share of talent to the amusements of the evening, sought no gratification to vanity, and shrunk from the praise of having so well acted a part: she is a very delightful girl indeed. Lady F. soon changed the masked part of the company into a ball, after the usual form, as a release from the irksome restraint of character, adopted, but not supported; and I believe the conclusion of the evening was the most popular. It lasted till early dawn, and sent many fair Cambrians home delighted, to dream over all the agreeable nothings which were poured into their unpractised ears. Adieu.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER XCII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, Wales, August

WHETHER you owe this to restlessness of mind or body, my dear Jane, you shall find in it the early dawn of a lovely summer morning. My open window admits the following list of agreeable sights and sounds; and, however you may laugh at the idea of striking out any thing new upon such a subject, you must own it to be one of which you, at least, have no personal knowledge. The hour may be what you sometimes hear, with half-shut eyes, as you quit a ball; and, by the silence of the castle, and the bright, gay look of all beyond it, it might puzzle me, if I had not the good old custom of winding up my watch at night. Every bird is in full voice, and some rooks, among the large trees, seem to have ~~taken~~ their flight in exchange with sea-fowl, which are filling the air through the Park

with their wild screams. The sea appears not yet awake, it rolls in so softly; and a white sail now and then catches enough of the morning sun, to make a variety from the dark brown fishing-boats, which are tarred, and have a dull look. There are some fishermen drying nets, and I can suppose, from the stir I see among the women, the whole business of baskets filling for market, which being six miles off, they will still reach in good time. The huts are so concealed by the rocks, that I see them very partially: but a fisherman, or his wife, cannot be mistaken, even at this distance. They are a wild race, and what would seem a hard life to a Devonshire lace-maker, sitting under her vine with her cushion and bobbins, is one of enjoyment and health here; and they trudge it along with light hearts under the load, for they seldom take any help from wheels to go six miles. You will think my summer morning very long, I doubt not, my dear Jane; and as it is ages to breakfast, you will find it still longer; for if I were to quit this room, I should be taken for the castle spectre; and it is always my way.

when my four quarters are incased within the limits of a solitary room, to send my mind out upon a scout after fresh food, and you must take your chance of what the store-basket may bring home. Among its other articles, I found last night much interest in conversation with a blind lady, who has been here for two days—one to whom the lovely page of nature is effaced, (if I here murder Milton, you must tax your memory to put me right); and it must be a hard task to conquer this feeling with her, as she was a painter in her youth; and in many of the rooms here there are specimens of her taste in selecting Welsh scenery, and a finer subject cannot be found for the pencil. She had, formerly, an acute memory, and this being now her chief resource to beguile time, she cultivates it highly, and can repeat almost as much as others can read at a time. She is very patient, and most grateful when she finds any one willing to talk with her. I taught her some of the little finger-crafts, which can be done without eye-sight, and such trifles are valuable to her. We shall be on the move for our tour soon; but I am resolved not to give

up my taste for Scottish scenery, whatever I see of beauty in Wales. I shall release you now, my dear Jane, as an hour or two trifled at my toilette, (well, that would be nothing to open your eyes at so wide with some people we know,) may bring me to the happy haven of the breakfast-table, the most desirable port for all cast-away damsels at this hour. Adieu.

Yours,

L. M.

I forgot to tell you I saw the ruins of a fine monastic building yesterday, where the stables for the ambling mules must have been magnificent. I was shown the well-worn pavement of the entrance ("low-browed") passage, which looks as if their sandals had all been Highland brogues full of nails.

LETTER XCIII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, Tuesday.

I WISHED very much for you yesterday, my dear Jane, to have partaken of a day spent quite in a new way to me. Lord F. made a large party to show us the sport of net-dragging, at a very wild and beautiful lake he has among the mountains, seven miles from hence. We went by all manner of conveyances, as modern carriages, even a curricie, never penetrated into these wilds. If I were to attempt a description of all I saw, I should write for two days, I believe; but I cannot give up the fishing part for scenery, of which you always find too much, I dare say. Then suppose the merry bustle, and to me apparent confusion, of a couple of dozen of men, all rushing into the water bare to their knees, while the net was thrown out by several more from a boat; and

then the hoop and halloo that followed in dragging to land this immense affair, the conjectures as to the quantity and size of the fish, and running for baskets, with all our eager watching for the first symptom of animation from the net! Soon it appeared; and hundreds of leaping fish, some over it, some in it, announced the success of the draught. One very fine fish escaped, "Ten pounds weight!" called out one; "Fifteen!" said another; and an old cook, behind me, exclaimed, "Had that fellow not escaped, my lord should have had the finest jack for dinner I ere filled with pudding." The next stage of the business I shall save you, dear Jane, for it was not pleasant; however, their pain was short, — shorter than the impression left with me. There were many more kinds than I can name; and, with different success, the same was repeated frequently. We had a tent pitched, and fish dressed near it, at the water's edge. Solitude, I assure you, fled before us wherever we appeared, and I suppose that wild place has not seen so lively a day for a long while: my lord told me he had not been there for several years. A harper and

lute played occasionally, and it was all very pleasant and gay. It is delightful to have a variety of country amusements in such good style for one's friends; the every-day the same, go to dinner, go to drawing-rooms, over and over, is not half so agreeable. It was nearly dusk before the last of our party straggled home, and when refreshed by a change of dress, we assembled in the great saloon, and spent a very pleasant evening. You feel acquainted with every one doubly, who has shared in such a day of careless enjoyment. I do wish you had been with us. Adieu, my dear Jane.

Yours,

LUCY M.

LETTER XCIV.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, September.

I WAS much pleased with a female school of Lady Mortimer's when we visited her, and as I got her to tell me to-day what her rules were, I think the best way to impress them upon my own memory, is to write them to you. The school-mistress is a daughter of farmer Dickens, who was brought by Lord F. to improve a Welsh farm, after the mode of ——shire; and his daughter Lady M. took to superintend her school. The girls are of all ages, as Lady M. thinks they cannot be too young for the object she has in view. Obedience, cleanliness, and civility, are their first lessons; and rudeness is one of the few faults for which punishments are regularly established: she says that the grateful mothers feel this the evil cut up by the root, as

one well-trained girl meliorates, if I may so speak, a whole family; and in one instance, where a mother had, from delicate health, to recall her child at thirteen, it is quite astonishing how the effect has been felt. "Such a thing would not be suffered at Lady Mortimer's school," is quiet sufficient when said by this little monitress. At first she had extreme difficulty, but when a few were made sensible that they were well treated, not over-tasked, and in return, were required only to be gentle and obliging, the example soon spread. None are rated for being dull; but each has justice done to their best exertions, when seen to be their best. Laziness is soon banished, and a cheerful and active occupation is always selected, to rouse the capacity and show what can be made of it. Lady M.'s rule is to give them a pleasure in being useful; and thus a little one is as much praised for cleaning and brushing up a piece of furniture, as one of twelve years old for a well-finished page of writing. Two girls find employment in arranging the classes, and in teaching the young ones, and each brings up

her pupil to their mistress when the lesson is ready. Arithmetic Miss D. takes entirely herself; but work, reading, and writing, is well taught by the two I mentioned. When I saw the school, there were thirty-six girls from six to sixteen. They assemble to breakfast, and each assists in cleaning up the things. Lady M. says, looking neatly and serving each other, brought with it a little addition of hospitable kindness, that contributes not a little to her views, in sending them home with improved habits. This is all over by ten o'clock, from that time till half after one is spent in the usual school teaching; they then play out of doors, and dine; and are in school till six o'clock. The last six months they are taught washing, but not sooner: as it is so popular, it is soon learnt. They make quantities of female dress for all ages, and as a reward, Lady M. gives them (as she provides all the materials) to be distributed to mothers and younger sisters, in the proportion that their conduct merits. Above four, but not beyond six, are allowed to assist Miss D. after school hours, for their own im-

provement, in any branch they wish. Their books are, the Bible, prayer-book, and the usual hymns from Watts and others, a short English history, and selections from the vast swarms of the most approved cheap repositories, such as teach the advantages of subdued tempers, and the evils of the reverse. So soon as any girl reads, Lady M. presents her with a Bible, and a few of these tracts, to carry home; and in a few weeks, Miss Dickens inquires into the use made of this privilege, and almost always finds good effects from it. As the improvement of their own fire-side manners and morals is Lady M.'s chief object, she gives a little money to each girl, to induce her to spend one year at home before seeking service; and from the wish to oblige her, and the natural pleasure of being useful to their families, there are few instances of their leaving home under the twelve-month. Four pounds is the sum she gives; and few girls cost more in absolute maintenance, in cottage life, than that sum. Besides, every girl can earn a trifle after she quits school, by work, washing, or such female

usefulness. Sixteen and seventeen is the latest they remain. As they all go home at night, the ties of family-feeling are no ways broken in upon, nor do they ever feel separated from their parents. Except breakfast, and of the most simple kind, Lady M. furnishes nothing of food; they bring with them what is cooked at school, — materials for soup, such as grain of different kinds, vegetables, a little butter, coarse bread, and so on. I found the footing to be thus:— one brought a cheese, another a little can of butter, another rice, another grits, salt, pepper, and such matters; all is put into one store, and all share alike. Miss D. dines with them, and adds whatever appears most requisite: her salary from Lady M. is £20., a cow, and garden, potatoe-ground, and grass for her cow, upon the express condition, that the children share in the produce of the cow; that nothing, in short, is sold or given away. The children each pay two shillings a quarter, which we shall call not more than £10. more, as Miss D. does not accept this from those whose parents are industrious and poor; but she makes it a

rule never to have it known who does *not* pay. One day each quarter is appointed, and she receives her scholars singly in her own room: the kind delicacy of this is felt by the parents very much, you may believe. It appears to be upon the best possible footing. As Lady M. bakes at home, she has her school breakfast-bread made of a wholesome mixture of the grain most abundant at the time; a small portion of soft sugar, with milk and warm water, makes, at all seasons, a comfortable meal. During winter, for two months, she gives them weak tea, as she admits of nothing but milk, water, or tea, being drank by the girls. The ingenuity of their dairy-management affords vast variety. Rice-milk, potatoes and milk, curds and milk, wild fruits bruised into milk with a little sugar, each is a favourite dish; gooseberries boiled and mixed so also, and well strained, is an excellent summer dish. Miss D. told me they had eight different milk dishes, besides milk-porridge. Lady M. sends a pitcher for breakfast daily. The cleaning which all this requires only occupies two girls about an hour each

day, and as they change every day, that is no interruption. I never saw a nicer house or school-room; the latter has three lattice windows in a bow, open during summer; and in front is a hedge of sweet-brier, roses, and honey-suckles. Jessamine and Chinese roses are only allowed upon the wall, being of cleanly growth. Miss D.'s own room is a sort of parlour, and has a bed-closet off. The dairy and store-room are at the other end of the house; and I believe Miss D. has a small room for uncut work, and dry stores of her own. Fuel is provided by Lady M. The school-room is large enough to admit of being a play-room in bad weather. The kitchen is behind, and there all shoes are made clean, and wet things dried, and such attentions to comfort paid by Miss D.'s servant, who is a country girl, accustomed to a cow, a garden, potatoe-management, and the like, and who takes lessons only in her Bible, and with her needle: she presides in all the kitchen department, and instructs those of the scholars who assist there each day. Much, of course, depends upon the school-mistress, and

her patroness; but here, where both appear so well qualified to turn this institution to its best purposes, nothing can be more essentially useful; and I believe the blessing is widely felt.

Pray keep this letter for me, my dear Jane, as I have written it while the impression was full upon my mind.

Yours ever,

L. M.

LETTER XCV.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, South Wales, September.

IT is very fortunate, my dear Jane, that your letter, which was given to me at —, by Sir Henry, who met with your Devonshire friends there, should have reached me before my love of the picturesque had been so much more prominent than what appears to interest you more — Nature alive, as you call it. You see by my date we have reached a maritime county in the more southern part of Wales, and here we remain for a few days with Mamma's old friends, the Ap Shenkins, or any such appropriate name you like. Your fancy is not amiss, that Isabella must be captivated in her turn, after so long a tour through such scenery, daily receiving the delicate attentions of my brother, which must take a character quite different from those of a drawing-room: it might be so to me or to you,

but Isabella appears totally insensible to all this, and having lived from infancy amidst such scenery, she is not at all likely to take advantage of what you term the "effect" of interesting situation : where she has no fears, she seeks no protection, and her own active limbs are quite sufficient assistance, without hanging timidly on my brother's arm, and shrinking at every precipice ; and her pony and she are so much older acquaintances than we are, that she leads and we follow. So this part of your theory falls to the ground ; and the perfect propriety of her feelings at all times dictates for the moment what is most becoming in manner. Her lively and constant spirits are quite the charm of our society ; and while watching, to me the novel, effect of a rainbow across one of those beautiful Rhaidr, I could not help thinking I saw Isabella's fancy catching each hue, and sparkling with innocent mirth, as the light spray fell around us,—it was quite an emblem of her. My heart, my dear Jane, is quite safe ; and if I were to say what my opinions were of any change of situation, you would find them not favourable. I have seen marriage under various

forms lately, and none except my cousin T.'s peculiarly pleasing, in my eyes at least: I have seen it as refuge from misery at home, and happy through gratitude; I have seen it a mere nothing, as in Julia's case; I have seen it form the gratification of ambition, and truly have no cause to follow where that leads; and I have seen it embittered, as with Jane P——, by being entered under illusions arising from wilful and romantic passion. So, my dear Jane, these are my reasons for not, as you call it, falling in love; a term I never rightly understood, and cannot find in any dictionary.

Do you know, dear Jane, I am writing to you after we have parted for the night, not finding time through the day; and in such a scene! an old castle, whose massy shadows fall lengthened under a calm, bright moon; and as this moon does not confine her beams to land, they silver a wide expanse of sea beneath my windows. Were not Julia smiling in rosy sleep beside me, I would get her to tell me the Welsh for moon and sea, out of which I could write something divine upon it all. This stands a great height above the sea, and rocks, I be-

lieve, furnish cellars below the Castle; such rocks as you might gather samphire from, with the same risks which are elsewhere assigned to that desperate trade.

We are in a charming house at present: by house, you must understand family. But, dear Jane, I must write about them another time, as it is later than I like to be awake.

Ever yours,

L. M.

LETTER XCVI.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, South Wales, September.

I CONCLUDED my last with praises of this family, and some days have elapsed since. You shall judge for yourself, my dear Jane. We found our arrival had been considered quite a gala; and we were received with a gay and hospitable air, which greatly prepossessed me in their favour.* The parents are not far enough advanced in life to have lost any part of their relish for it, and the children are from all ages, down to ten and twelve: we shall call them Montgomery. Sir Edmund is a man whose breakfast is of the sportsman's cheer, and his lady appears equally robust in her habits: the young ladies are of the romp-loving kind, and, of course, their brothers follow the family fashion. I discovered, the second day, we had got among quite new characters; and I ob-

served, for the first time, Isabella sought my mother's side, with some appearance of claiming protection against a noisy familiarity, which warned me a new scene was preparing for me. Mamma delights in Isabella, and particularly in the quick-sighted delicacy of her conduct, and she adopts her as a younger daughter.

The party increased to an amazing size, and some most singular oddities I have met with. I must leave ourselves out of the question, and describe them, for we were all overpowered, except Sir Henry, who romps with the best of them for the amusement of us all. I never saw an all-day frolic party in my life; and I confess it startles me to meet blowzy girls on the staircase, as I go out of my room to breakfast, in full cry, like a pack of hounds. These ladies are the belles of the country, and their beaux appear to know their taste. I was called from a book this morning to see "such a delightful trick." This proved a poor girl, as I should have said, on the point of having her neck broke. She was caught in a swing by a side rope which fixed her upon the top of a tree, from whence she was to be rescued by one of

the youths of the house, who, in climbing up, caught her in his arms, and handed her down to another, and so on to a third, which third, as he set her on her feet, received a slap in the face, and she ran off; he followed, and a kissing-scene ended the fray. This was such a joke as served (well it might) to laugh at and tell over all day. I cannot say I see any merit in this; and I could not help thinking to-day upon the oddity of their mother's plan: "My daughters, Lady E——, will never fall in love, I keep them too merry for that." True; but by debasing a sense of proper female feeling, her daughters may go off with Tom the footman, who is set at an angle of the Castle to howl when the ladies pass along to their rooms, while an open window blows the candles out. Mr. Tom, too, is a fiddler, and a ghost, and such like assistants, as makes him quite the companion. If ever I have daughters, they shall be kept upon the highest ridge of propriety, and never suffered to slide into the marshes of frolic; at least of this sort.

Sir Edmund had been long in the army, and his lady once lived near St. James's; but these

days appear long forgotten, and, as Sir E.'s favourite expression is,

“ Whistled down the wind.”

Brother E. found a young navy friend here, who is to carry us to Lord F.'s in a barge he has off here; and the sooner the better. Adieu, dear Jane.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER XCVII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, September.

WE returned here by water ; and I must confess, I prefer Lady F.'s arrangements for society greatly before those we left : though, I believe, there is no sort of harm among them, yet it was not at all to my taste. I was delighted to find Lady O. and her two sons here. Lady Mortimer also met us, to carry home Isabella ; but she remains while we do. Other changes also I see here — Medora is left to ruminate upon the effects of Miss Emma's attractions : she has left this, and it is quite evident what have been the consequences of her plans upon the mind of one who, whatever else he might not be, was a good husband ; now he is peevish and discontented ; and his wife, though she suffers, bears it in silence. Would you believe it, I heard her called " a poor spiritless creature ; why not

exert all her powers of pleasing to efface the impression this girl had made?" Thus when the best feelings of our hearts are wrung with anguish, we are spiritless, for not being able to coquet a little to recall a husband's attention; a part, by the bye, I should think not very easy for a wife to play. This strikes me the more, dear Jane, as both you and I heard a lady I need not name, under similar circumstances, once so praised and admired for her exquisite feelings; and you recollect these were beautifully poured into a sympathising bosom; and that day we drove to — Wood, we heard it said, "Poor soul, I trust 'it will not lead her into Doctors' Commons. But who can blame her? she has been so horribly used: he is quite a brute." You, and every one else, know how this ended, and may judge how far such contempt, as I see shown of Medora's conduct, tends to support suffering merit. The wrong is made appear the right too often in society, I think; at least, if I may judge by such a slight allusion, made in these terms, to the worst moral conduct. I see Isabella waiting me on the Sea Terrace to walk, so you are saved further

moralising. Lady F.'s birth-day is next week, and she has begged it may be passed over, as Lady O. would fly from any gay scene; but Lord F. appears to have some plan of his own about it. Sir Charles is arranging his sketches, and intends to present them to Maria, as a companion to her Scotch views. Isabella begins to draw with great taste; I never could: I want patience, I imagine.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER XCVIII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

— House, North Wales, Sept. 10

WE left — Castle a few days ago, and with a large party came here, Sir Edward and Lady M. having gone before us. Isabella was my companion in Mamma's carriage, and E. drove her. I perhaps did not tell you (no, I know I did not) that he whom you so torment me about, by name "The Stranger," had joined us at — Castle, and accompanies us upon this tour. Gifted as he is, with every talent to make society agreeable, he is a great addition. Your jokes are quite misplaced; and since you will have his name, it is Sir Charles —. Now, my dear Jane, are you satisfied; and do you see, that he can be nothing to me, more than a most agreeable acquaintance. I find it in vain, amidst such a party, to give you any regular account of our tour; and you must,

therefore, open a tour through Wales, by those who had leisure to print such, and where I mention I have seen any thing striking, turn it up. You know Edward the First was remarkable for castle-building; "so are others," you will say. Now, dear Jane, leave such trifling, and look back into those days when Wales was in her glory, and the scene of much interest to the historian and the poet. I suppose that sentence will satisfy you; I need proceed no farther, and you will take Conwy and Queen Elinor, with Caernarvon and the others, all from more authentic sources than I can give; and as to names, I cannot attempt them. How do you like this one of a Welsh king, Gryffydd ap Cyran? My dear Jane, I could no more get my pen about these long-tailed words, than my tongue to pronounce the German or Scottish gutturals. Mountains I saw, and to spare, last year; but I lost the usual share of cascades, generally bestowed upon travellers in the north, as those seen before my sprain were not in beauty, from a dry summer—a thing never to be complained of by me, however; and, after my accident, I should have made a bad figure limping up to

the Hermitage at Lord B.'s, and at Dunkeld. I did not know, till too late, that I might have had easier access. Maria and Frederick, however, saw foaming torrents and boiling cauldrons of all descriptions.

To water scenery then I shall direct my attention, and Isabella has shown me one here, which made me quite giddy, while she absolutely danced on, leaping about like a goat, neither stunned by the noise of the water, nor startled by fear of breaking her bones, from a sudden fall. The rest of this family are all as agreeable as possible, and the *ménage* quite perfect. Perhaps it is customary to a mountainous country, but they appear to me to have an art all their own, of being incommoded by no accidental circumstances; there is an easy, gay hospitality without parade, that I found at the foot of Glencoe, and again meet near the base of that father of mountains I break my neck to look up to, where we are soon to get better acquainted with "shaggy goats and horrid rocks," as your hermit's tale describes.

Yours ever,

L. M.

LETTER XCIX.

Mrs. II. to the Countess of E.

Richmond, September.

MY DEAR LADY E.,

I HAVE letters from your sister, announcing the safe arrival of her daughter and family. She desires me to let you know, as she had not time to write twice by that post. I suppose you have heard of an elopement, which occupies us all very much. I shall not enter into details, as they [are at all times] disgusting; but the most atrocious feature in this story is, that the lady had sat for two years smiling in her husband's face at the head of his table, while she carried on this correspondence. In the sight of both God and man, I think this cold-blooded mental guilt a grievous additional sin. The parties had not met, indeed were in different countries; but surely this aggravates her guilt much. I hear

her husband is half distracted. Mercifully, she never was a mother.

My son is returned, and very happy with his children: five lovelier young creatures cannot be. He places the two boys at school, and leaves the girls with me. I do hope he will marry, as I cannot expect him to live with me; and it would be selfish in me, to wish to withdraw his children from their natural roof. Nearly the usual race of man is run with me; the ten years which follow the threescore, I may never see; and if he met with an affectionate heart, to mother these girls, it would be a great source of anxiety off my mind. His rank in the army is now so high, few situations may offer of employment to carry him again from home; so he cannot do better. Believe me, my dear Lady E.,

Yours, with sincere esteem,

H.

LETTER C.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

North Wales, September.

I MUST, I believe, bring all our horses and carriages to the door before I begin my tour. Isabella has a pretty Welsh pony of her own; Sir Henry bought me one, and the gentlemen who did not drive, each had theirs. Mamma in one curicle, with my uncle and two others, followed; and thus we are out for three weeks, my dear Jane. Perhaps F. might not have felt much delight in such a ramble, if Isabella's lively taste had not been his guide; but under such direction, he dare not talk of Alps and Malta, burning mountains or Swiss lakes; so we are all pleased, seeing through the favourable medium of pleasurable sensations; mine are particularly so, Sir Henry and Sir Charles being the two men I should prefer, as travelling companions, to all others. I met here with one of my old

acquaintances, a "cairn," but called *carried*, and it appears always to have been heaped over some cell, or vault, or passage, where the cemetery was, or single grave: some too of the pits, such as I saw one of in Scotland, that appeared there to have been applied to burning their dead, or cooking food, or, perhaps, however horrible the idea, used for either purpose. In Scotland it was very well exemplified to us in cooking moor-fowl, which some gentlemen did; and I ate them with pleasure; they are broiled between heated stones covered up with turf: I need not carry my surmises the extent of burnt human bones, which, however, I was shown both here and in Scotland. Travellers' wonders, Jane will say: true, however, my ignorant kinswoman. Once only in Scotland I heard of a she-saint; here they are so common, your pony scrambles up to their cells, or springs, or rocky beds, quite as a matter of course. By the bye, this spirit of devotion, I suppose, first taught horses to go on their knees; if so, ours are free from such grace, as they are the most sure-footed little creatures possible.

We saw a very singular cascade, which tum-

bles very handsomely once, and disappears into a basin, where it rests a little, and then roars from beneath a natural arch, worn, I suppose, by the force of this ceaseless torrent: they are called *Rhaidr* here, which means cascade. On this arch Sir Charles bribed a shepherd to stand, that we might tremble at the sight, I suppose; however, the man pocketed his five shillings, and laughed at our fears. We saw a Roman station also yesterday, but I did not hear of any vitrified fort, such as I mentioned in Scotland. Isabella writes out a list of names to guide you, which I shall inclose, marking the extent of each day's journey. The inns are sometimes so so enough, and we make it a rule never, except where it is a family we visit, or Isabella at least visits, to go to a private house. We often receive polite invitations, and when that fails, a basket with a few delicacies, and wine, fruit, &c. &c. is sent to the inn. How beautiful some of the names are; and really, though I did laugh at English history, yet it makes it much more interesting, seeing the mouldering walls which so many known characters and scenes were connected with. How beau-

tiful, for instance, Castell Dinas Bran sounds; and the name of Llewellyn was always interesting to me. I was rather shocked by a good vicar boasting of the fine pasturage of his church-yard, which is nine acres in extent; but he put me into good humour afterwards, with a proposal of showing us the exact spot, very accurate certainly, where Milton made Sabrina rush into the Severn. I took it upon the gentleman's word, and can at any time suit myself in such a spot, as we are to see more of this river. We have seen Powys Castle, but I cannot tack it to the end of a letter. We got to Sir R. L.'s to-day, an old friend, or rather son of an old friend, of Mamma's and Sir Henry's. Adieu.

L. M.

LETTER CI.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Shrewsbury, September.

IT would be unpardonable not to mention Powys Castle in particular; it is very commanding in situation, and, though inland, has fine features and extensive views: every thing is in ancient taste, and if you believe all that is told, it was often the gift of the monarch to the favourite of the day. Within doors, after looking at, and listening to, all that could be told or seen of its galleries, stair-cases, and large rooms, I was particularly amused with a family group painted upon a ceiling, where all the females represent the virtues; and the males, I suppose, were intended for the vices. There is a famous Lady Mary, celebrated for her golden visions, also, whose story is recorded somewhere, but I don't recollect by whom.

My uncle had friends here, so we remained two days; and though we have seen much, there is still much to see—Castle Saxon—but there are little remains, beautiful walks, and remains of religious houses of orders, friars black and grey, and battles recorded without end. The old bridge is a beautiful one, and, as usual, a source of great jealousy to those who built the new. Sir Charles has taken some sketches as we came along, and several here also: he draws very rapidly. Isabella is his pupil, and a very ready one. Mamma has a wish to quit our first plan, and go through some of the western counties. I see much resemblance in character through Wales to my Scotch friends, though in one respect they differ—there is much more quickness of feeling among the Welsh, or they show it more readily, than in Scotland. I thought while there last year, I often saw great forbearance in this respect; they never press their *own* feelings as a selfish reason why you should do this or that; and though I was told the lower orders were cautious and cunning, I saw many more instances of self-restraint from better motives

than these, than I did of the character attributed to them; and their hospitality alone is a proof of disinterestedness, as it is shown to those who, nine in ten, can never return it, and arises out of the circumstances of the moment too much to belong to cautious views of self-interest. I believe it is true that the Welsh are seen now just as they were two hundred years ago; and they are a lively, interesting people, though a little touchy sometimes.

We are to see Plinlimmon only at a distance, as every thing cannot be done with a party so large as ours; but its sociability compensates for little deprivations. We spent one day with a family of young ladies, busily employed recounting all their conquests to Isabella after a first season in town, and it led me a little more into the secret than I ever was before. Isabella encouraged their chat, as she loves a joke as well as I do; and part of it I must tell you.

After a little pressing, one sung a song about hearts, and darts, and cupids, and looking down, sighed and blushed of course, which was hint

enough for her sister to whisper to Isabella, "You know who made that." "Indeed I don't," said Isabella. "Oh ! fyel" the singer, in affected anger, "how can you think of telling ; I will never forgive you." This I translated quite differently, and in revenge she blabbed just as much as was agreeable, I suppose, of an evening at the Opera, and one at the Argyle Rooms, and so on ; by which we found these poor things had filled their minds from the airy nothings which are said at every place of public amusement, and, condensed by a few months of home retirement, grow and flourish in Wales, choking up the more rational ideas of life, as it really does appear divested of such folly. Men of course pick out those most easily deceived by their nonsense, and, careless of the mischief it does, repeat the same round of idleness wherever they go. "Could I believe her such a fool?" was the answer I got once when I pointed out this to a noted "sayer of sweet nothings." I much fear every female, whose imagination is her interpreter, upon first coming into society is "such a fool," however ; and this accounts for

the silly flutter girls are thrown into in the presence of men often, who have given them no greater cause to think of them, than such evening talk. Adieu, dear Jane.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER CII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Wales, September.

I WISH I could pack up a nice little inn where we dined yesterday, and send it, with my compliments, into the midst of the Highlands of Scotland. This one was in as wild scenery as any I witnessed there; but so nice, and so well kept; though a very old house, it was quite a pattern. The only unpleasant thing we found in our tour last year, 'was the total indifference they appeared to feel on the important concern of cleanliness. Fresh air does not seem to be a thing they know how to value. They say, "Lift the window;" and it is a lift you would find impossible; by which I mean, the windows are seldom hung, and when 'raised up, there sometimes may be a check to keep them open, but much oftener some substitute is to be sought for, and your arm half broken in the meantime.

The duties of the brush, too, are woefully neglected. I am not much surprised that they do not like our mop, as in so moist a climate as that part of Scotland we were in, they told me wetted flannel answered better for their floors; but it is all much in need of amendment.

Sir Charles got a slight contusion upon his shoulder to-day, by his horse taking too sharp a turn, which threw him against a rock; but Mamma has undertaken his cure. What a beautiful effect it has when the sun breaks out over the top of one of these mountains, while the morning clouds lie low down as a screen to the base. We saw the effects of this near ope of the Rhaidr, whose torrent was quite concealed from us, though we heard it very near. This, dear Jane, I think quite a scene for the indulgence of those feelings we so often lament in Miss H. Dwelling in solitude upon the ever-varied magnificence of natural objects, which, as Milton makes Eve observe, are "all unconcerned" with our disquiet, must in time give a new tone to the mind, and detach it from former interests. I can understand, though I hope never to experience, its effects.

Isabella is quite happy at a preference she thinks she has discovered by some of my comparisons in favour of Wales over Scotland. In one respect it has great advantages—the objects of interest connected with former times, are more distinct. In Scotland you are told, such was Ossian's cave, such Ossian's stone, where his dogs were chained, and many circumstances that might make you suppose you had only to turn round the next mountain and find the feast of shells ready prepared; but you had best keep your eyes shut, for the moment you cast an English look, at least upon the objects and scenery thus described, all vanishes into wilds and morasses, where no trace except names remains. *Morven* was a name I delighted in, and many others equally, found in the poems, which, whether real or fictitious, are of great beauty, and most perfectly describe the country, so far as I could judge. But in Wales we look about us with greater feelings of security in what you are told really having been so. I am afraid, however little it becomes a picturesque traveller, I am influenced too by a long day's exercise, concluding at the cheerful mansion of

a country gentleman. In all the hospitable comforts of such, I write this to-night, which may prove my apology for intruding a feature not entitled to find a place midst visionary tales, either in prose or verse. Adieu.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER CIII.

Mrs. H. to Lady E.

— Park, September.

MY DEAR LADY E.

I CAME here a few days ago, on a visit to my old friend, Lady W——d, and I was fortunate enough to come into this neighbourhood, before the annual fête is given at the hall to —— College: not regularly a college, I think; but from the lads being of all ages, from fourteen to twenty, it is not just a school either. The great park was thrown open, and four barges decked out upon the water for rowing matches. As there are few things under a roof which please boys, his lordship arranged every thing out of doors, tents for refreshments, &c. &c. I think myself rather past the time when these things have much relish, and I went only to please my friend, whose two grandsons were to be among the guests; and I am extremely happy that I

did, for it proved a very fine sight. You know I seldom attempt to give descriptions, so you must suppose all the decorative part, and be contented with what attracted my notice to the youths. In an instant, forty of the rowers were stationed at the oars, at least ten to each boat, six rowers and four to change; coats, caps, all thrown off, and with one hearty shout they set off. Poor fellows, their perfect enjoyment was quite reward enough to Lord — for all the trouble he took. Some strolled in parties round the water, watching for their turn; some formed groups about the music and refreshments; and others had their cricket matches; thus uniting all the amusements natural to their age: it was a day of real pleasure. Perhaps you know enough of the character of this entertainment, to be aware no one feels restraint, but finds every part of it presented as if he were master; the youngest boy, or grey-haired teacher, is equally at ease: the gaiety of youth is not checked by ceremony, and scholastic retirement of manners is not dragged forward into the notice of those, whose judgment is guided only by the higher forms of polite

society. I will venture to say no plan for real pleasure could be better arranged. My lord gives a hearty welcome to all as he meets them, and his presence is no farther felt by his guests, than as the means of promoting their enjoyment. There are rulers and lawgivers appointed among the boys themselves ; and judges of the field sports are not wanting, who fill their station with a perfect fellowship in the scene. Happy rogues, it made me young again to hear the bursts of mirth from their light hearts.

My pen is very unworthy of giving you any idea, with justice, of what I saw ; and Maria must add the park scenery in a fine autumn day : if I were to go as far out of my way, I should fill up the back-ground with shawls and clogs, and all the host of fears which Lady Lucy laughs at, when colds and aching bones are in prospect ; but sometimes such are the consequences to the lookers-on ; and I have only to hope, she may be long of finding this remark to be true.

With every affectionate regard to the young people, believe me, dear Lady E.,

Yours most affectionately,

H.

LETTER CIV.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, Wales, October.

————— Folly in wisdom hatch'd,
 Hath wisdom's warrant and the help of school,
 And wit's own grace, to grace a learned fool.

* * * * *

Since all the power thereof, it doth apply
 To prove by wit, worth in simplicity.

SHAKSPEARE.

YOU must forgive the pedantic air of such a commencement to a lady's letter, but you will admit its application.

Lord F., to celebrate his wife's birth-day, and give a parting festival to his tenantry, fitted up an old banqueting-hall, and assembled them last night, I suppose to the number of two hundred. Sir Henry and my brother, Sir Charles and others, wished to join among the peasants, and dressed themselves so as to pass for people of the country; only Sir Henry took

the dress of King's Jester, in Edward the Third's time. All the ladies were, with Lord F., the lookers-on. I never saw a happier group; some danced, some laughed and talked apart, and appeared at ease, and in free enjoyment. Lady O. had Lord F.'s arm, and seemed more animated than I had before seen her. The two boys were in raptures, and dragged Lady F. and me to see a sailor's box of glittering wares, which he said he came to sell to the country folks. I supposed this a little additional kindness of Lord F.'s, and hardly glanced at either the man or the box; he had a swarthy complexion, matted black hair, and a patch over his left eye: his box was slung on before. To please the boys, Lady F. was examining the box: she seized some trinkets, and grew deadly pale. I saw directly this was a first gift she had given to H. D., and immediately guessed the sailor to be himself. I led her to a little distance, and found, while she looked at the thing, she was satisfied he had taken this means of introducing himself, or had sent some friend to feel his way. I entreated her to conquer her emotion, and take this opportunity of convinc-

ing him that all access to her was debarred I must say, Jane, she stood before me a noble proof of corrected feeling. The wife of Lord F. felt as she ought; and taking my arm, we returned to the sailor, whose voice we neither of us had heard. Lady F. said, "Pray, sailor, how came you by this ring?" "I found it, lady, sparkling upon a dreary shore, the only remnant of a shattered wreck."—"Do you suppose nothing else was saved?" "Nothing, lady, the tempest swept all before it; but in your splendid halls you can have no knowledge of a sailor's sufferings, or pity for those stranded hopeless on your shores."—"You are mistaken, sailor; I once was driven, by my own folly, upon a tempestuous ocean, and nearly wrecked also; but having found a safe harbour, I shall never more desert it." This was pronounced in a voice so steady, with a look in which virtue had quenched emotion so entirely, he groaned, and turned from us, and I saw him no more: she cast no glance after him, but went to her husband, and passing her arm through his, appeared to have thrown a weight from her mind. It was a bitter, though a wholesome

medicine she had administered to him, and I sincerely hope will have effect.

We found Sir Henry in characteristic talk with Lady Olivia, and telling her he had a recipe to chase grief away.

Lady. I fear, good fool, not with a jest.

Fool. Dost know why my Edward drained his moat, when he had reared two new towers?

Lady. No, I do not.

Fool. That the vapours which mouldered the old walls, might not affect the new.

Lady. But the dregs remained to do the same.

Fool. Ah, ha! think'st the fool knows no better; these walls were so fair they threw back the sun brightly to dry up the moat, and only meadow green and summer flowers ever sprung again.

In such a way Sir Henry made her sensible through the evening of her folly, at the age she now is, to neglect her children and shut herself up; and what from his own mind, and other wise fools, he had stores for all the characters he wished to admonish. He did it severely, I must say, where he thought it was required;

and as we were a party of twenty-five at supper, you may conclude the usual varieties were to be found for a fool's jest to work upon.

A few days more is all I shall see of Wales. I shall part with regret from Isabella, and, I hope, she will do so from us all, too. Adieu, my dear Lucy.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER CV.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, Wales, October.

As the party had all broken up to-day after their own tastes, I secured Lady Mortimer for my companion, and we went out in a boat. I could not help adverting to Medora's situation, and venting a little of my feelings. She said, "I wish you knew a friend of mine, whose conduct did her so much credit. I shall call her Lady Charlotte, as it is a name in her family, and give you a little sketch of her the last ten years of her life. She had been very happy at first in marriage, but found her prospects clouded a little; and, though in every respect she conducted herself well, she could not reclaim a husband, upon whom the most artful of women had thrown her spell. I need not to you, Lady Lucy, dwell upon those feelings, which only a wife can understand; but, after a few years, the

struggle appeared almost too severe for her; particularly as he felt abashed by her gentle and quiet sorrow, and superior worth, and became, as a mask to himself I believe, churlish and fretful with her, to hide if he could, or stifle his own self-reproaches. She had fine infants; and, I believe, at this period, there were five. This could not last, and he quitted her, and went abroad. Most women, I suppose, would have given him up as lost; but she took a far better part,—retired to his family place, educated her children, and having found out to what part of the continent he had retired, begun a correspondence replete with good sense and judgment; never made the slightest allusion to the cause of his absence; gave cheerful pictures of herself and children, the improvements of his family place, and the most interesting events in their joint families: this she continued, without receiving one answer, for the long period of four years. I suppose there is scarcely another woman in England who would have gone through this very hard task; but while she wept his desertion, she betrayed no reproachful feeling to him, and at last was

rewarded. The home-felt purity and innocence in which he saw the woman, whose heart he had almost broken, supporting herself under such a trial, was so strongly contrasted by the caprice and worthless sordid characters around him, that he burst his chains, and fled to her, (I have heard him say,) as from earth to heaven; and now, I believe, there exists not a happier pair.

Jane, what do you say to this? She was only five-and-twenty at the time he left her! What feelings must have been subdued to bring her to this. Poor soul! I shall get acquainted with her, I am resolved. Adieu.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER CVI.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Castle, Wales, October.

THIS is my last letter from Wales; and were it not to scold you, it should not have been written. You find fifty faults; I tell you nothing of Sir Charles, and nothing of other things, which I really can find no leisure to mention: then you are a little sentimental about your living out of the world, and my living in it. Well, well, child, all that should have satisfied you, that though you have leisure to ask questions, I may want it for answers. Captious little thing, I must have you better taught, Jane. As to Sir Charles, this man of mystery, as you call him, surely he is better entitled to keep his secret, than I am to ask for it; but I did startle him a little lately. . We have a beautiful creature here, married to a so so oldish, crossish man; a fiery descendant of I can't tell how

long a line of ancestors; and his wife is constantly making mistakes, by picking the plums out of the pudding where he wishes them to stick fast; and his reproofs for her low notions of this rich dish of family antiquities, only puzzles her brains the more: we laugh, and he is angry. Sir Henry asked her if she would like her picture drawn; and you know, ugly or handsome, we all accept that offer with pleasure; and Sir Charles had sent for his brushes; so behold us all in mute attention, and she simpering with cheeks like cherries. I stepped behind Sir Charles, and said it must be very wearisome to paint for so long a time; but perhaps you like "to teach your trial patience, with that pretty face before you." I thought the best of all absent lovers might be the better of such a hint; and he took it, and whispered, "When the sealing day between my love and me shall come, she shall thank you for this." I had never before alluded to his fair incognito, and really I thought she might wear the willow, if he paints each pretty face at random thus.

E. would fain have got Isabella Mortimer to sit to Sir Charles, but it would not do; she

always turned it off by some joke. I think expression is so much her beauty, that she would not make a very good picture; and she said also, her father would not thank her for sticking up her picture, thus making it quite plain not a smile should be painted for him. I believe when E. parts from her he will be apt to say, "Earth holds no spot so distant where he shall not seek her again."

My brother has got Mamma to accompany him to the Abbey, where you know she has not been since my dear father's death. We have written to Maria to be there before her, with her suite, in which good Mrs. — is not forgotten, you may believe. I suppose there is quite a full neighbourhood now, and many changes must have taken place since we left it. Adieu.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER CVII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Abbey, October.

WHEN I reached this, Maria had a budget of Scotch letters for me, and I was happy indeed to find all my little mementos had been esteemed so much for my sake. One of my northern correspondents says, "We are much pleased with the English bride; but, my dear Lady Lucy, you know we have no fancy for English wives in general; however, if you will come among us in that character, you may be sure of a hearty welcome."

I saw this prejudice when there last summer, and I could not understand it: some women, I suppose, had the folly to lament the loss of London society and luxuries; and some men, I imagine, had thought only of carrying north a little more rank and fashion than they could find

there : but I suppose such ill-matched pairs who come together with mistaken views, will agree as ill on either side of the Tweed. How it may be I cannot tell, but I was assured very few Englishwomen conformed to the tastes and habits of the country. Now, always excepting being shut up among those stormy mountains and seas all winter, I can see no hardships in Scotch life, and perhaps it is only from want of knowing what it is. I make the exclusion of Mull, and some such, from my winter scenery ; they do, to the unpractised eye, present a fearful barrier, during many months of the year, to my ideas of social life.

I could much more easily go into their complaints against their own countrywomen throwing large properties and family interest away upon Englishmen, who withdraw them from Scotland, and in a country where, in general, the wealth is laid upon its own soil : this is a just charge against a woman.

Maria and her suite are all here, and I hope my little Snowdown will make her a horse-woman, for a pony is the only thing of the four-

footed kind she can venture upon; a horse alarms her beyond management, and a donkey, when it brays, is equally fearful.

Yours,
I. M.

LETTER CVIII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Abbey, October.

SOON after I returned here, my dear Jane, I went to that field we used to call Becchwood Lawn, where we so often spent our hours of pastime, some four or five years ago. I found the cowslips had bloomed this season, as before, and I gathered some of the bunchy heads full of seed, for the sake of those days. A wicked comparison with joys of childhood fled and withered, came across me, and I almost flung them away for suggesting such an idea: though connected with no one feeling I call my own, yet with what a pang we first bring home to our own bosoms, the possibility of withered happiness! All that now glows with such heart-felt delight over every hour of my life, can it wither? Oh! these cowslip heads, how I hate them.

I am very silly; such melancholy thoughts were suggested, no doubt, by a letter from poor Louisa M., that most true Waterloo mourner. Few that have worn the weeds of woe, have felt the agony of grief which still clouds her best days. Betrothed, you know, with her father's best blessing, to Capt. L., that sorrowful day laid all her happiness in the dust. She writes me thus, which I believe as true a picture of her feelings as could be drawn.

“ I am much struck by a line of Lord Byron's, written, I believe, for me; in which he uses a term I never met with before: ‘ the indistinctness of the suffering breast.’ What is this ?

“ Is it a tear undried, ere sleep has flown,
A waking start, a low-breathed moan ?
A sense of sorrow with returning light,
Entangled still in visions of the night ;
Those fading forms which dimly show
Pale fancy's reign — o'er real woe ?”

Adieu, lest I infect you.

Yours,

‘ L. M.

LETTER CIX.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Abbey, October.

THIS being the first Sunday since we arrived here, I was much pleased to find my brother ready to give his arm to my mother. You know the situation of the church: we all walked along the laurel terrace, to the private entrance; it is not a hundred yards, I suppose, from the east side of the abbey; and, I believe, was once connected by buildings with the centre. My brother placed my mother in her own chair, and seated himself beside her. Her emotion at first was very painful; but I believe the hope which this instance of E.'s consideration gave her, that he might one day fill my loved father's place in the eyes of that congregation, soothed her mind into greater composure than she had hoped for. Forgive me, Jane, for dwelling a moment in fond regret for that parent, who,

during the long period of fifty years, made this church the chief scene of his pure and most exemplary devotion. He seldom allowed any business to withdraw him from the great festivals of our church being observed here by his family: and I believe his first wife was a worthy partner in those earlier years, when he fixed upon this as his favourite residence. Seven-and-twenty years my dear mother sat in that place, which, so much to his credit, my brother now considers still as hers. My father's first wife, you know, left no family. Our excellent Mr. H. adapted his sermon to the occasion; not in flattery, far from it, but pointing out the blessings which had attended my father's conduct, and delicately exhibited his example to his descendants for imitation. I do most sincerely hope, that my brother has now a better view of his own good, and that he will shake off the evil of bad companions. This seems a strong expression, my dear Jane, but I have smarted so severely by his being led away from such causes, that I cannot soften it. There is something enchanting in devout seriousness in youth. During the evening, I saw him keep

aloof from every thing proposed at all unworthy of a Sunday evening; and with a grace and manner all his own, he said, being for the first time master of an established family, no one under his roof should plead his example as an excuse for levity in the occupation of the evening. He led me to the organ, and gave me Handel's music, putting an end to a discussion upon which some of those present wished to throw ridicule. To you, my dear Jane, I add, with much pleasure, that he intends to request Mr. H. to read prayers in the large library in future, at nine o'clock every Sunday evening.

I write all this, my dear Jane, after the house is gone quiet for the night, and I carry a most grateful heart to my own repose. May God bless my beloved brother, and strengthen all good in him. Adieu.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER CX.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Abbey, October.

Do you think it any proof of friendship to be jealous, my dear Jane? I advise you to read the last pages of Mad. de Maintenon's life, and you will find so frightful a picture of its effects, it will cure you. I shall love Isabella Mortimer with as much affection as I now do, whether it is agreeable to you or not. I must quit the only subject you ever came upon, which I think not becoming either your head or heart.

We have some most agreeable neighbours here, particularly Mrs. S. and her two daughters, Mary and Nancy. Mary is my favourite, and Nancy gains all the gentlemen: Mrs. S. herself pleases us all. She has given her daughters the best possible education; and as they have large fortunes, she means to introduce them next winter, so that being nearly of

Maria's age, we are glad to cultivate the acquaintance. Nancy has a degree of lively, quick conversation, which she must quiet a little; but being perfectly new in society is so original, it takes very much. Mary has more mind, I think, and is much handsomer, but not so striking: she says she never feels happy in company but in her sister's society, she gives her so much help; and perhaps it is fortunate, for the soft and timid character of her own feelings, might not fit her so well for the world without something to lean to. I found out Nancy can take likenesses, as when Maria showed her drawing with E. and the dog, she begged to carry it home, and, in some sly way of her own, had caught a far better turn of E.'s figure, to which, as she had taken it near, she added an exact likeness of feature: this really made a beautiful thing. I joked her, but she said it was a common trick of hers to steal a marked countenance. I mean to send this drawing to Lady Mortimer, particularly as it represents the pensive cast E. has at present. I showed it to E., but would not tell him whose pencil it was by; and he could not suspect

Isabella's, as the tree was too marked an object, and the dog was not in Wales with us.

These girls have no particular talent for music, but sing in parts with very correct taste, and appear to have every essential in education very well grounded. I find even merry Nancy always reading some book, that can only be taken up with a view to improvement. Frederick is all raptures in her society, and she laughs at all his nonsense with real wit.

Sir Charles has left us, and makes a great blank. I have heard so much against male friendships, that I dare not call what I feel for him by that name; but why it should be so, I cannot tell. Here is a man of unblemished honour and worth, with an affectionate heart, a temper to sweeten the mixed cup of life beyond any I ever met with, and possessing all the other advantages to command esteem, say — that awful word, when it comes from female lips, — affection: and yet how I should be cried down were I to speak to my brother or my mother of him beyond the common terms of acquaintance-ship. He would be accused of the unmanly vanity of gaining my affections, while under en-

gagements to another; and I should be called all the fools that ever lived for throwing away my feelings where they could meet with no return. Perhaps it is well we should on all sides have these restraints imposed upon us, and be left to those female friendships which torment us by their silly jealousies and prattle. Now be jealous, if you like: this, fairly interpreted, proves you have more cause than in Isabella Mortimer's case. So I leave you with this comfortable morsel for digestion, dear Jane.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER CXI.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Abbey, October.

WHEN I came down to the breakfast-room two days ago, I found no one but Maria with her eternal pencil at an open window. “ Bless me, Maria, you will take cold this chill morning; do shut the window, and call for breakfast.” “ Lucy, just wait a moment; I am sketching E. and his Swiss dog, where he is sitting upon the trunk of the fallen tree, which he laments so much.” I seized my Welsh whittle, and curious to know the subject of his meditations in, for him, so singular a situation, I approached him with

“ Hot rolls and butter break the Briton’s fast :”

“ and since when did your lordship find morning’s misty dreams supply their place? Really, E., you look as dismal as any of those fallen

leaves which the frost has driven down." He made some of those excuses that mean nothing; and Vivay, hearing the cheering summons from the Abbey tower, leapt up, and seconded me, while I took his arm, and proposed going home to breakfast. "Trust me, E., I can write a prescription for your moody humour, if I do not mistake your complaint, that shall prove a cure; find a winged messenger, if you think the posts to Wales are too tardy, and we must live on hope till his return." He muttered something which implied I was a madcap, and he a fool; neither of which I minded much, and we reached the house.

I withdrew with him to the room called the Ladies' Library, after breakfast. You remember its old window, I am sure: all the saints and crosses are now so overhung with ivy, it is deserted by all but myself; however, "it pleases me the rather:" and I have my writing-table in the recess which this window forms, and having added a few billets to my fire, I sat down to row E. a little out of, what appeared to me, a most causeless fit of the dysmials. He leant his head upon one of the old figures which support

the chimney-piece; and really I could trace a resemblance to himself in the black marble.

"Well, begin. Not a word, E.?" "Oh! Lucy, it is all nonsense; I have nothing to hope, so I have nothing to say."—"True, E., in spring we hope, in autumn we despair; but as my feelings own no control of season, I shall, being a case of necessity, pass over winter, and start at April. Well, then,—Abbey, April 20th, 1840.—Will that do?" "No, we shall be all dead by then, Lucy." And I extracted a smile at last by the date of a period when his present cares would at any rate sit very light.

"This is trifling, E., I must begin: here is April — no date. Surely it must be a bad spring if it cannot yield me buds of promise, verdure of hope blooming in scattered flowerets of infant passion, bespangled with the dewy gems of joy. Won't that do?" "Nonsense, all nonsense, Lucy." "Oh! I don't profess to write sense, or I should make a very dull love-letter." But what title have I to talk of joy? Well, if I have run too fast, I will fall back a little, and lay you pensive upon a pale primrose bank,

gathering true-blue violets, which peep between as emblems of your faith, to be strewn over the pure mirror of her mind; which image you take from the clear basin at the foot of your bank. Never get into the scrape of laying yourself to sigh by the side of a great Scotch lake, or a Welsh rhaidr. Who would look for a lover among long heather? or hear one, even the deepest, sigh by these torrents, which roar loud enough to drown all the love-thoughts within their reach. No, no; a trim, neat, well-kept, clear piece of water is what we require; and in this quiet, manageable scenery, you have the whole feathered tribe at your command, and may run the octave over from the lark's gay carol, to the low love-murmur of the stock-dove; and find all reflected from the pertest daisy to the full-length lover himself, in the tranquillity of your own park, or any other well-bred scene, where you choose to lay the landscape.

I have now worked through spring, and am brought to the very full-blown blush of summer's clustering roses.

These roses, they are my torment; time in-

memorial has given them thorns, and obliged all lovers to promise they should have none. How to get quit of them is the puzzle; strip them, you cannot, you bring the bloom along with them; and a helpless rose, hanging by the bark of a naked branch, can be turned to no poetic purpose. To pluck them requires hedger's gloves; and to bind them up so tight, that they are hid by their blooming companions, does not answer either. Some tried that, and in drawing the cords too close over my own breast, I found the roses wither; and what became of the thorns is no matter. Surely these shelves may help me. I pulled down every author, and breathed the perfume of every rose since Adam's wreath first dropt from his hand, till our own time, not knowing where to get assistance. E. fetched me Anacreon, and said he was a master in the art. His roses were beautifully painted; but just as I had found a simile to my mind, the old rogue dashed a goblet over my paper, and effaced the whole. Thus ended my love-letter talents.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER CXII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Abbey, November. 1

I AM delighted to find the good steward has been very kind to all my old pensioners ; and he told me a few days ago, if I would go to see Nancy, I should be much pleased with the neat style she kept every thing about her old mother. I did so, and saw, dear Jane, the remains of the swing hanging to the old oak, where Nancy was so often our assistant. The cottage was newly whitened, and a porch put up since I was last here : a window stood half open, and I could not resist taking them a little by surprise, and saw the good old woman sitting, as usual, with black Tom upon her knee, and as near the fire as possible : both had their eyes half shut, while Nancy was reading a torn-looking paper ; it might be a letter. I went in, and startling her from her studies, she came to me

with a very happy face, "Oh ! Lady Lucy, how kind to come and see us. Mother, here is Lady Lucy." I wish you had seen the clean, nice old woman, as she took her staff before I could hinder her to rise at my approach : the few silver tresses left, were neatly bound round her forehead by a plain mob cap, and her whole appearance did Nancy great credit. I sat beside her for some time, and found ~~her~~ quite distinct : she is eighty this year. Nancy had carefully deposited her paper between the leaves of her mother's Bible ; but I would not let her off so, and asked what she was so busy reading when I came in ? I saw directly Nancy's heart was at her lips, and found that her uncle had sent his son to sea, and parted them on the eve of marriage. " But, my Lady, Timothy is constant still, and says he will soon have money enough to come home and marry me ; and if my Lord is kind enough to leave us this cottage, I am not afraid but that I can take care of mother, and be a good wife too. I take in work now, and I am never down-hearted. I was reading Tim's last letter, Lady Lucy ; it is very old now, but very kind." Her mother

looked up with that expression with which benevolent age views the sanguine hopes of youth, and said, "She deserves to be happy, and if I saw her so before I left her, I should die contented. You know Farmer Hickley's only objection was, that she would not leave me and look after his family, as the dame was dead, and so he parted them. Tim wished to be married first; but Nancy said, though her heart should break, she would not lead him into disobedience." Nancy wiped away a few fast dropping tears, and turned the conversation, by showing me her work. It is chiefly for children; and she had such piles of nice things in baskets, which, in fine weather, she sells under the little porch, which Tim had put up for the purpose, that she might not disturb her mother. And, "Look, Lady Lucy, he planted this honeysuckle, and I that rose, and in summer they bloom and are so sweet. I give them water regularly, and he will be so happy that they thrive."

I told her, if she could add a few girls to be taught work, I should ask my brother to build a room to their house. You remember the little garden and the daisy bank, I propose it

should be built out there, and have a porch similar to the one in front, besides an inner door. E. is very willing to oblige me, and it is to be set about in spring. Nancy is as grateful as possible. My brother had a large party out with the hounds to-day, and as I crossed the park, they all bounded in over the low fence which skirts the Yew-tree lane, and it really was a gay sight. On account of the deer, they close their sport always on the outside of this fence, and couple up the dogs; but the day being fine, E. and his friends rode some races on the flat, as a breathing, they told me, for the day's work had been a lazy one, old Renard would not break cover in the furze, as they expected. I envy them the sort of free enjoyment they have on horseback, and almost regret that so much is said to us of danger, for the boldest of us are but timid in a real gallop. Nettle-top is in fine condition, and I ride every good day; she had run at grass for three months, but E.'s groom has brought her in again. • Adieu, dear Jane.

• Ever yours,

L. M.

LETTER CXIII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Abbey, November.

SINCE you are come within a hundred miles of me, my dear Jane, I receive your letters much sooner. I hope all your patients are so far recruited by eighteen months of Devonshire, that you will join us here at Christmas. Mamma has written an invitation to the Mortimers to do so also. I hope they may, as a friend of mine is in high fidget till the answer is returned. I restore you entirely to my favour, and you have come off very handsomely by your retort, to prove how little you are jealous of my new friendship. You advise me to write to Sir Charles, as I should do myself much more credit in letter-writing, than being amanuensis to my brother. I understand you, my dear witty cousin; but, were I capable of putting my friendship upon such a footing, it would have

exactly the opposite effect from what you expect. I should be so anxious to meet the eye of his judgment to advantage, I should be stiff and formal; measured words, and long pondered-upon expressions, would so disguise my natural manner, that I should be esteemed a very dull correspondent. No, dear Jane, to no one but yourself could I talk on paper. To my mother, affection and anxiety to smooth every occurrence which might give her uneasiness, would shorten, if not constrain my letter: to my sister, sweet girl, I feel so much the importance of just views upon her entrance into life, that each word would bear the stamp of my having been three years and a half sooner introduced than herself; to my dearest E. I must feel, though younger, I am in some things elder too; and to Sir Henry I write as I would have done to my Father. Every-day or chance letters go for nothing; they have one object at the moment, which being dispatched, are not to be put upon the footing of correspondence. To you, dear Jane, my letters have no object. How do you esteem that compliment? No object more than the ever-varying

clouds and sunshine as they pass over me; and with the seasons, you know, they partake of every change which you thus share in.

We go to the Priory for a week to-morrow, Sir Henry, my two brothers, and myself: Mamma half promises to follow; but I hardly think her serious. The Duchess writes to me that they have a large party, and both the Marquis and Lady Caroline are at home. Lord D. is solacing his care-worn mind in her Grace's lively circle, and Miss Emma and her aunt are there also. Mrs. S. and her two daughters are invited, and fifty others; some of whom I know, some I do not. The Marquis, you know, and E., went over the Continent two years ago in company. I think the Duchess is a pattern step-mother: she and the Duke's family are upon the footing of brother and sister; but it would never be my choice. Adieu.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER CXIV.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

The Priory, November.

THIS house is so full, that I can take any hour of the day I like for my pen, not of the night, for we keep shocking hours. Besides those I named, we have some agreeable foreigners, and Captain Rattle, as you used to call him, with the travelled Lord A. Lady Caroline looks very handsome indeed this year, and her brother I think quite a model of finished manners. Himself a master in the art, so necessary even in such society as this, of banishing *ennui*, he seems less to study what can appear agreeable in himself, than to draw out the talents of others; and I do believe, if you were to ask any one at the conclusion of an evening what they thought of him, you would find the person you asked, giving a detail of the many instances

of good taste he showed, in what he thought of them. He even tolerates Rattle only in so far as good nature guides the pencil of that excellent caricaturist: his impudence is a proverb, you know, and he has the sort of quickness that can catch at half a glance the weak point, so as to raise a laugh even in the object against whom it is directed. In mixed company this is very amusing; however, the Duchess keeps him under. Fortunately, she was not present when he made the attack direct upon Miss Emma, who is upon a new scent at present, assisted by her title-loving aunt; and as Lord D. is for ever assuring us he has done with public life, while it is quite plain he pines to return to his trammels again, Rattle plays off both delightfully, and assures Lord D. Miss Emma is quite the companion for his retirement: meanwhile she flirts it away with double vigour, and being only twenty years younger, she looks upon her conquest as all the more sure. So as she does no more harm than this, she is most welcome. She may succeed, for Lord D. has not had leisure to look at a woman these ten years; and I dare say, none but this young

lady would wish to profit by his leisure now he has found it.

Lord A. is so wrapt up in the clouds of Great St. Bernard, I can make nothing of him. Really if I made all my friends last year as weary of the Grampians, as he does me of the Alps, I wonder they tolerated it. Talk of what I like, I am carried off into a valley, mounted up to some snowy top, or rolled suddenly down upon the *mer de glace* : there is no end of it.

Nancy S. is a universal favourite, and Frederick has many rivals ; she laughs in her usual *sans souci* way, and when she can gather a choice group, draws them all off quite in character, and obliges each to name him or herself, however ridiculous may be the attitude she has placed them in. The Duke told me, she reminded him of his beautiful sister, Lady C. ; I hope she may be more fortunate, he added ; but these talents, when she is more known in the world, may prove dangerous. At present she is a sort of spoiled child, but so agreeable a child, I believe no one wishes her less so.

We had a lottery, which was managed by

Mad. de St. G., and it lasted from ten o'clock till one, and was, under her arrangement, really amusing. All the gentlemen being in her secret, you may be sure the prizes were bestowed with less blindness than Dame Fortune does, when left to her unassisted judgment. Lord A. laid at the Duchess's feet the black bear-skin which had been his bed on mount St. Gothard, and so on, each what they esteemed the most worthy of being presented, and had at hand. Many and various were the little French nothings emblazoned with sentiment, and rendered applicable to those to whom the turn of the wheel awarded them. I suppose the Duchess's toilette had been swept of all that gold and mother-of-pearl could yield from it, as the gentlemen could not have had ladies' ware so ready. I furnished E. with a turquoise chain, to be worn by Lady Caroline, and the Marquis had a beautiful bracelet ready for my arm: this is very French, and not much according to English feeling. Would you not have been surprised if Sir Charles had clasped such a complimentary remembrance upon my wrist on parting? And surely the man whom you may

flatter yourself. esteems you, is better entitled to such a privilege than the acquaintance of a day, or a ball-room: however, this is only a little of my unbending humour that does not easily glide into these pastimes; but I was, be assured, as *folâtre* as all the rest of the party, and played the harp till my fingers ached to assist at the solemnity of the wheel, which was all in correct form; and a procession attended, which placed the party in very picturesque array. Sir Henry and Frederick performed principal parts, as you may believe. We concluded the evening with dancing. The S. girls and Lady Caroline E., the Marquis and Colonel G. danced a beautiful new figure to *La Poule*, which I shall carry home. Mary S. looked very lovely; she brightens like a fixed star after the evening is half over, and she feels more at ease: her carriage is the most graceful possible, and her many other attractions must gain upon society very fast. How hard it is that such gifts in the art of pleasing as her sister's cannot, in a world like ours, be left to nature's guidance; at least I fear they must not, lest their luxuriance might entangle her in a way

she is little aware of. Their mother looks with pride, chastened by anxiety, at the distinguished appearance they make here; and particularly when Nancy is surrounded by a circle of those who, perhaps, never before were spell-bound by untutored taste and fancy, such as hers. Adieu, dear Jane.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER CXV.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Abbey, November.

THE answer from Lady Mortimer has thrown a damp upon us all; it is a refusal of my mother's invitation, and I translate it thus:—

“ We are quite aware what were Lord E.'s sentiments while here, but as his footing in the world is very different from ours, are we justified in carrying further an acquaintance which may risk the peace of our child, while he might have no view but in trifling away time in society, where she appeared more attractive than he might think her in the greater glare of life.”

And I subscribe entirely, my dear Jane, to this feeling. E. knows her value, and if his attachment withstands the daily allurements he meets in the world to estrange him from her,

she will be a much happier woman in accepting him after this trial; so I look on in silence, and say nothing to cheer him, but that, till she has refused him he ought not to be so confident it must happen. Privately, I see no reason why she should, and I think it not likely she would; but I will never say so to him, but leave her image to work upon his mind with all the force which doubt and absence give it. I write to her occasionally, but never name him more than in remembrance with my mother. Frederick and Sir Henry remained at the Priory: I found one week quite sufficient; it was more fatiguing than a week of town at the gayest season. The S. family are arrived, and intend to go soon to town, as the buildings are not finished at ———, and nearly two years of the Continent leaves Lord S. much to make up in political information: you know how keenly he enters into all that. Adieu.

Ever yours,

L. M.

LETTER CXVI.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Abbey, November.

I do not much wonder that those who must lay the blame of their *ennui* upon any thing rather than themselves, should throw it upon this season : it has lost the bracing effect with which autumn follows the summer solstice ; and it has not reached the lively current of winter sport, and seems to place us at a hopeless distance from the reviving charm of spring : yet I like it, every page of nature's great work is interesting to me, and I am just returned from a walk where I saw the full effect of Miss Baillie's beautiful description of such weather, when,

——— “ Beneath some murky cloud
The sunned glimpses of a stormy day
Shiver in silvery brightness.”

These, I think, are her words. I cannot say it

is with a poet's eye I "look through nature," but it is with one so full of affection, that no change seems dreary.

Before I went to dress, I opened the saloon-door to see what the rest of the party were about, and was saluted with, "Bless me, Lady Lucy, have you been out on foot?" "Yes." "That is astonishing! not one of us, except Lord E., went beyond the riding-house: were you not blown away?" "No, I did not find it at all unpleasant." "Well, I own this weather bores me to death: I wish November and December were effaced from the calendar."

Now Jane, though I said I understood the cause, I promised no toleration for the effects; and I own I do pity people who must have their occupations and amusements thus served up in courses, and are annoyed in this way when one fails. Let the weather be such between breakfast and dinner as to preclude going out, they hang about the public rooms like so many unstrung instruments: touch any one you like, and you will find all in discord. I wish I had you here to help to laugh them out of it; but, you sly thing, I know how you would set about

it; you would affect extreme sympathy with each individual's fancied evil, and, by extracting the whole for your amusement, bundle them up till you had leisure to enjoy it in detail; and thus you are much more popular than I am, with those who confide in you during their moments of discomfort. I am a far more honest character, I can assure your ladyship; however, it appears not the best policy in this case.

I hear from Lady F., that Lady Olivia is their constant visitor; and I dare say they prolong their stay on her account. Lord F.'s excellent advice must be of use to her; and, for the sake of her sons, they will prevail upon her to quit the country for a residence nearer the scene of their education. One is about fourteen or fifteen, but I really forget exactly: however, it would be an injury to them were she to seclude herself longer. Yet I cannot figure her going into the world under a length of time: not that her grief would be the bar, it is spent, and she clings to the shadow; but habit must be gradually overcome. Surely love and grief are two passions that, more than others, have their boundaries fixed, when they have no food. This

idea, I believe, is more true than a romantic person would willingly admit. I draw my conclusion from this, that a strong mind will work its way through their control, and a weaker is for a time overwhelmed, and perhaps recovers the soonest, from the relief it feels, though probably does not acknowledge: when the storm is over, strong feelings have nothing long to hold by in such characters.

Ah! how you prose, Lucy, I hear you say, so I have done.

Yours,

L. M.

LETTER CXVII.

Mrs. H. to the Countess of E.

Richmond, November.

MY DEAR LADY E.

I HAVE paid every attention in my power to Miss C., but somehow it is difficult to make a single woman of her age feel comfortable in society. I have heard it remarked somewhere, that if spiders would live together they might spin silk: now if single ladies of that time of life would live together, they might weave a web of comfort for themselves they do not meet with in general society. I own it requires a great many virtues to withstand the want of ties, and being shook loose of the world; feeling perhaps at the same time that we possess all the qualities which make others liked, but for want of opportunity to draw them out, they droop and corrode each other, I suppose. And your friend is of this number; she seeks a place she

cannot gain, and will not be contented without. I was sorry to meet with Captain D. a few days ago, lately come home, looking wretchedly: he intends to join you at the Abbey soon: pray nurse him up a little.

Mr. B. is in town, getting a house ready for his lady, in G—— Square: all that fondness can lavish upon her will be done to arrange it handsomely. He is really a kind-hearted man.

Yours, my dear Lady E.,

Most affectionately,

II.

LETTER CXVIII.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Abbey, December 1st and 10th.

I HAVE been longer silent than usual, my dear Jane, but I am in a manner hostess of this Abbey, (I should say abbess, I think,) and a great deal of company has entirely occupied my time; but now I am at your command. H. D. arrived here a week 'ago: I had not told Sir Henry of my last interview, so he passes for being now only arrived from abroad upon a change of ship. * I took him to task upon the wildness of his scheme, and he assures me, having once seen Lady F. in so respectable a situation, he shall never again intrude himself; and I can observe he is more calm, and bears the loss of her affections better than he did. If female society be agreeable to him, Mary and Nancy must contribute to his enjoyment of our party, as much as they do to ours; for they,

and others from the Priory, accepted my mother and brother's invitation here. I had a letter lately from Isabella Mortimer, written in excellent spirits, so if she misses any of us, at least she does not show it. She promises me a visit next summer, as she is to leave Wales with her father on a tour; but I half hope to see her sooner, as E. grows more and more serious, and has even talked of having down some tradesmen from town, to fit up the west wing which was added by my father, but left unfinished.

Friday.

I was called away when I had written so far, to settle a dispute between Sir Henry and Nancy at billiards, and it was such bitter weather. I was glad to warm myself by an hour of battle-door and shuttlecock, as all the party were engaged in the great hall at some occupation of an animating kind, with two good fires. I think we shall be snowed up: unless you come soon, Jane, you will find the Abbey buried.

Do you know a game called Consequences, which your friend Rattle introduced here? I.

was quite unacquainted with it, but he is a master of ceremonies, you know, at all times, and can assist our minor talents at right and left. Under all difficulties he has abundance of wit; whether of his own, or only fresh churned up, I 'suppose no one stops to inquire, and these characters always get on well. If you or I, or brother E., or Sir Charles, were to say a good thing, it must be a very good thing indeed, to make it worth our going as far out of our every-day style; but with Rattle's fancy seems ever to play at large, and one thing so soon obliterates the agreeable other thing which came before it, that none of them require to be particularly good of their kinds to pass current. This game of Consequences goes thus: a lady's name is written by one and folded down; a gentleman's, by another; where they went, by a third; what they did, by a fourth; and consequences, by a fifth; and read out by a sixth. Rattle reads with us; sometimes he spares a blush, sometimes creates one, by his ready, arch way of doing it; and where his quick eye catches mere *platitudes* that will not raise a laugh at all, he improves the whole. For in-

stance, he had a lucky hit at me, for we are always quarrelling; and when he found me married to the Great Mogul, he ran rapidly over the rest of my fate, and made the consequences, "a great improvement to the future card-covers at Bath."

You are by no means confined to present company; many pairs were put together, to be drowned at sea, or break their bones on land; sent to all quarters of the known world; many married, many quarrelled, and not a few did both. But over a good blazing fire, in a large circle, it is very amusing of a winter evening.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER CXIX.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Abbey, November.

I HEARD to-day, that our old friend, Admiral ———, was laid in Westminster Abbey last Thursday. I once thought that the most en-
 viable tomb for a friend; but since I saw the
 church-yards of Wales, their fresh garlanded
 graves, and well-chosen words of sympathy, I
 have changed my mind. One thing in the Ab-
 bey I dislike much, — a stone is not always laid
 where the mortal remains of those we love are
 deposited. I went last season with a lady who
 was going to erect a tablet to a friend's memory,
 and requested to be shown the exact spot: we
 were referred from one to another, and at last a
 sexton pointed to a part of the pavement, and
 said, "There, madam, there, I assure you, Sir
 I. F. was laid." He said it, but how were
 we to be assured it was so; no stone had been
 laid, and one lay for some other person close

beyond. You shun treading on a stone as you go along under those solemn arches, but walking over pavement conveys no feeling; and the tablet, put up at a distance, is, to me, more to satisfy others than oneself. Remember, Jane, if I die before you, you are to have me covered by a stone, a simple stone, with "Lucy" engraved. I claim that feeling when gone, that none shall pass over me without knowing a fellow-mortal is gone before them. It may be said, what does it signify? Nothing then, probably, but a great deal now. However, if we are allowed to look back at all, I cannot help thinking that this outward form will interest us even after death has done its work. An author, whom I believe you like as much as I do, asks this solemn question, "When you shudder at the possibility of seeing the human form after being deprived of life, did you ever consider that your freed spirit must one day look upon your own?" This is a solemn thought, and one which, if rightly applied, may be of much benefit to us. Good night, my dear Jane.

• Yours ever, most affectionately,
L. M.

LETTER CXX.

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Abbey, December.

I SHALL be much pleased, when you join us, to introduce you to our morning parties. After we get the gentlemen sent out, Nancy and Maria sit at one table covered with all the drawing materials in the house, Mamma and Mrs. S. have a work-table, Mary reads aloud, and you may dispose of your humble servant as you think best. I don't know that my place is exactly to be found; but I heap on wood, I overlook the pencils, and sometimes interrupt the reader by a sally of my own impertinence, upon any passage which don't meet my ideas, such as this, which we had red-hot war upon this morning.

“ Tour à tour une musique céleste se fait entendre; et le verset suivant, dit en recitatif, est murmuré d'un ton sourd et presque rauque; on dirait que c'est la réponse des caractères durs aux cœurs sensibles, que c'est le réel

de la vie qui vient flétri et repousser les vœux des âmes généreuses ; et quand ce cœur si doux reprend, on renaît à l'espérance : mais lorsque le verset récité recommence, une sensation de froid saisit de nouveau ; ce n'est pas la terreur que la cause, mais le découragement de l'enthousiasme."

"How very fine!" was echoed from all sides. I could not subscribe to this feeling; and I must say, I think all such fanciful interpretations given to our religious feelings from the mere and momentary impressions of sacred music are very dangerous. How is religion to be our support in the world, if it is to be raised or lowered by such artificial means? In life, how will it shield the bosom against temptations? in death, how will it prepare us for the awful change? This is but one of the many passages in which this well-known and much read author misleads those who put their feelings under her guidance.

I got this volume closed, and gave many a brighter task for the morning, that we might

"Learn whate'er the sage with virtue fraught,
Whate'er the muse of moral wisdom taught,"
without being bewildered by Mad. de Staël.

Maria has been most fortunate in becoming acquainted with those two girls before we go to town. I cannot express how much I like their characters; Nancy dazzles from pure spirits and talents, employed in the innocent exercise of themselves throughout a day, never long enough to weary them; and Mary shines with perhaps a calmer brightness, but not with a less steady light. She is a very superior girl, I think, almost an Isabella Mortimer; but she wants some of the shades in Isabella's character, which better suit my object in cultivating her friendship.

I could not help thinking just now of your remark, that my present companions were too amiable to amuse you; perhaps they are, my dear Jane, if by amusement, you mean a sketch of folly such as I sometimes may indulge you with; but that ought not to be too much praised.

I hope my next will be to welcome you here.

Yours, dear Jane, affectionately,

L. M.

LETTER CXXI. .

Lady Lucy to Lady Jane.

Abbey, December 19.

I MERELY write a few lines, to say my mother's carriage shall meet you, my dear Jane, at ——. Come then, dear girl, and let us have a merry Christmas: a month is to be the shortest of your stay. I lay my positive commands, this season of festivity being all under my controul.

Yours,
L. M.

LETTER CXXII.

Lady Lucy to Isabella Mortimer.

(SENT BY LORD E——)

Abbey, February.

MY DEAREST ISABELLA,

I HOPE that my brother has, before you read this, pleaded his own cause so well, that he requires no assistance from me; but I cannot deny myself the pleasure of saying, I have watched his growing attachment to you from its birth. My very dear Isabella, it was my wish from the moment I first found in you those qualities I think so likely to ensure his happiness; and how far I feel sure of them, you may judge, when I wish to bestow his heart upon you. I have, perhaps, with too fond anticipation looked to his success; but as I knew your feelings had never been interested in any one, and as I hope you saw before we parted enough of his to give

you a pretty sure guess of his intentions, (at least I did, my dear Isabella,) I must hope that during this interval, your mind has not been quite unoccupied upon the subject. The anxiety with which I look for letters from him, is not to be told. Adieu, my dear (I hope) future sister ; you shall soon hear from me, if I get the welcome *yes* sent me.

Yours affectionately,

L.M.

LETTER CXXIII.

Lady Lucy to Isabella.

Abbey, February 28.

BLESS you, my sweet girl; true to yourself, I find the heart you meant to give, was frankly owned to be all his own. It would truly, much as I detest affectation, have added to that feeling, if I had found it in you. My dear, honest, and sincere girl, may every blessing on earth be yours: he loves you with as sincere and perfect an attachment as can beat in the heart of man; and, my dear Isabella, I may say more, you are the first woman in whom he ever saw a true natural character to love; those who have hitherto been even objects of admiration to him, were as different from you as night from day. He is now four-and-twenty, was early thrown upon the world his own master, and of course has seen more of that world than young men of his age generally have; but, for-

fortunately for you, he has discovered in what lie
 its snares in time, and disgusted in some degree,
 he turns to domestic happiness as a safer state..
 And you, his fortunate choice, will be the
 clasp^{ing} bond which shall wean him entirely
 from all the follies of the last five years. Re-
 member, I do not represent him as perfect, by
 no means, but I have just said enough, my
 pretty bride, to prevent Cupid's bandage being
 fixed too firmly on; and as you see I conclude
 it is on, I shall go a little beyond usual limits,
 and add, take him into your heart, let him
 possess every corner of it, but keep your head,
 both for his sake and your own, a little above
 the delusion too common in strong attachment,
 and in a twelvemonth after this, both you and
 he will be the happier. I treat you, dear
 Isabella, as I think you deserve, — as a girl of
 stronger mind, and more confirmed good sense,
 than your age would lead one to expect, and in
 me you shall ever find a most attached friend.
 E. has been in dreadful despair, all of
 which you will get in full detail, no doubt,
 with the proper lover-like exaggerations; but
 he did think himself, in many respects, not

worthy of you; and he was quite right, my dear Isabella; and the consequences of this timidity have been very much for your advantage.

Adieu, my dear sister; you really were my chosen sister before you or he ever looked to such a possibility. Again and again, may all happiness be yours.

Ever affectionately yours,

L. M.

THE END.

ERRATA.

- Page. 41. line 4. from bott. for "polishes" read "relishes."
88. line 4. from bott. for "stickit" read "steekit."
124. line 8. for "least" read "great."
150. line 3. for "close-potind" read "close rou. d."•
154. line 5. for "wish" read "risk."
178. line 16. for "taerted" read "treated."
277. line 2. for "banquet" read "bouquet."
284. line 18. for "books" read "looks."•
425. line 22. for "many" read "Mary."•

To be placed at the ~~end~~ of ~~the~~ volume.

